SCS #1443

T. F. Torrance

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A

# TREATISE

## CONCERNING

# RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

## IN THREE PARTS.

PART I. Concerning the Nature of the *Affections*, and their Importance in *Religion.*

PART II. Shewing what are *no certain Signs* that *religious Affections* are *gracious*, or that they are *not*.

PART III. Shewing what *are diſtinguiſhing Signs* of truly gracious and *holy Affections*.

By JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.
And Paſtor of the firſt Church in Northampton.

Lev. ix. ult. and x. 1. 2. And there came a fire out from before the Lord,—upon the altar; —which when all the people ſaw, they ſhouted, and fell on their faces. And Nadab and Abihu —offered ſtrange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Cant. ii. 12. 13. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good ſmell. Ver. 15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes which ſpoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

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# THE

# PREFACE.

THere is no queſtion whatſoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual perſon to be well reſolved in, than this, *What are the diſtinguiſhing qualifications of thoſe that are in favour with God, and intitled to his eternal rewards?* Or, which comes to the ſame thing, *What is the nature of true religion? and wherein do lie the diſtinguiſhing notes of that virtue and holineſs, that is acceptable in the ſight of God?* But though it be of ſuch importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein profeſſing Chriſtians do more differ one from another. It would be endleſs to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Chriſtian world; making manifeſt the truth of that of our Saviour, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.*

The conſideration of theſe things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmoſt diligence and care, and exactneſs of ſearch and inquiry, that I have been capable of: it is a ſubject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever ſince I firſt entered on the ſtudy of divinity.—But as to the ſucceſs of my inquiries, it muſt be left to the judgement of the reader of the following treatiſe.

I am ſenſible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the ſubject of this diſcourſe, in the midſt of the duſt and ſmoke of ſuch a ſtate of controverſy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature: as it is more difficult to write impartially, ſo it is more difficult to read impartially.—Many will probably be hurt in their ſpirits, to find ſo much that appertains to religious affection, here condemned: and perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others, by finding ſo much here juſtified and approved. And it may be, ſome will be ready to charge me with inconſiſtence with myſelf, in ſo much approving ſome things, and ſo much condemning

others; as I have found, this has always been objected to me by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a hard thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been *good* and glorious. in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same time, to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been *bad*, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am *humbly*, but *fully* persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, nor go on in a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much good, and so much bad, should be mixed together in the *church of God:* as it is a mysterious thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving grace of God, and the new and divine nature, dwelling in the same heart, with so much corruption, hypocrisy, and iniquity, in *a particular saint*. Yet neither of these, is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new or rare thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail, at a time of great reviving of true religion; and that at such a time, multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true saints. It was so in that great reformation, and revival of religion, that was in Josiah's time; as appears by Jer. iii. 10. and iv. 3. 4. and also by the great apostasy that there was in the land, so soon after his reign. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews, that was in the days of *John the Baptist;* as appears by the great apostasy of that people, so soon after so general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many; John v. 35. *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*. So it was in those great commotions that were among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ: *Of the many that were then called, but few were chosen;* of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching, and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy, but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of the great trials that came afterwards, and endured to the end: many were like the stony ground, or thorny ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good ground. Of the whole heap that was gathered, great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit that was in the apostles days; as appears by Matth.

xxiv.

xxiv. 10.—13. Gal. iii. 1. and iv. 11. 15. Phil. ii. 21. and iii. 18. 19.; and the two epiſtles to the Corinthians, and many other parts of the New Teſtament. And ſo it was in the great *reformation* from Popery.—It appears plainly to have been in the viſible church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit-trees in the ſpring; there are a multitude of bloſſoms; all which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promiſing appearance of young fruits: but many of them are but of ſhort continuance, they ſoon fall off, and never come to maturity.

Not that it is to be ſuppoſed that it will always be ſo: for though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity; either in particular ſaints, in a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with ſaints, and counterfeit religion, and falſe appearances of grace, with true religion and real holineſs: yet, it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the church of God, than has been in ages paſt; it is plain by theſe texts of ſcripture, Iſ. lii. 1. Ezek. xliv. 6. 7. 9. Joel iii. 17. Zech. xiv. 21. Pſal. lxix. 32. 35. 36. Iſ. xxxv. 8. 10. Chap. iv. 3. 4. Ezek. xx. 38. Pſal. xxxvii. 9. 10. 11. 29. And one great reaſon of it will be, that at that time, God will give much greater light to his people, to diſtinguiſh between true religion and its counterfeits; Mal. iii. 3. *And he ſhall ſit as a refiner and purifier of ſilver: and he ſhall purify the ſons of Levi, and purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs.* With ver. 18. which is a continuation of the prophecy of the ſame happy times, *Then ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.*

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed, that the devil has had his greateſt advantage againſt the cauſe and kingdom of Chriſt, all along, hitherto. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed againſt all revivings of religion, that ever have been, ſince the firſt founding of the Chriſtian church. By this, he hurt the cauſe of Chriſtianity, in, and after the apoſtolic age, much more than by all the perſecutions of both Jews and Heathens: the apoſtles, in all their epiſtles, ſhew themſelves much more concerned at the former miſchief, than the latter. By this, Satan prevailed againſt the reformation, begun by Luther, Zuinglius, *&c.* to put a ſtop to its progreſs, and bring it into diſgrace;

disgrace; ten times more, than by all those bloody, cruel, and before unheard-of persecutions of the church of Rome. By this principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion, that have been in our nation since the reformation. By this he prevailed against New-England, to quench the love, and spoil the joy of her espousals, about an hundred years ago. And I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this, the devil has prevailed against the late, great revival of religion in New-England, so happy and promising in its beginning: here most evidently has been the main advantage Satan has had against us; by this he has foiled us; it is by this means, that the daughter of Zion in this land, now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes: Lam. i. 17. *Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.* I have seen the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country.—Satan goes on with mankind, as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of paradise, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy paradisaic state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled Eve through his subtilty, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the church of God in New-England.

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and do neglect carefully to look all round them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance.

And so it is likely ever to be in the church, whenever religion

gion revives remarkably, till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between saving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shews, and glistering appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. *By this means*, the devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing acceptable service to him, that is indeed above all things abominable to him. *By this means*, he deceives great multitudes about the state of their souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them: and not only so, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's sight, some of the vilest of hypocrites. *By this means*, he many ways damps and wounds religion in the hearts of the saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections wofully to degenerate, and sometimes for a considerable time, to be like the *manna*, that bred worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the minds of others of the saints, and brings them into great difficulties and temptation, and entangles them in a wilderness, out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. *By this means*, Satan mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies of religion, and strengthens their hands, and fills them with weapons, and makes strong their fortresses; when at the same time, religion and the church of God lie exposed to them, as a city without walls. *By this means*, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and so sin without restraint, yea with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might. *By this means*, he brings in even the friends of religion, insensibly to themselves, to do the work of enemies, by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. *By this means*, the devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling; and during the strife, Satan leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, till the right path in the middle is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this confusion, the devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government

government of all into his own hands, and work his own will. And by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit religion, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unhinged and unsettled, in things of religion, and know not where to set their foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing at all in religion; and heresy, and infidelity, and atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavours, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Till this be done, it may be expected that great revivings of religion will be but of short continuance: till this be done, there is but little good to be expected of all our warm debates, in conversation and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however feeble) endeavours to this end, in the ensuing treatise: wherein it must be noted, that my design is somewhat diverse from the design of what I have formerly published, which was to shew *the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God*, including both his common and saving operations; but what I aim at now, is to shew the nature and signs of the *gracious operations* of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever that the minds of men are the subjects of, which are not of a saving nature. If I have succeeded in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any light to this subject, or no, and however my attempt may be reproached, in these captious, censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the acceptance of the sincerity of my endeavours; and hope also, for the candour and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

PART

# PART I.

## Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion.

1 PETER i. 8.

*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*

IN these words, the apostle represents the state of the minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the persecutions they were then the subjects of. These persecutions are what he has respect to, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of *the trial of their faith*, and of *their being in heaviness through manifold temptations*.

Such trials are of threefold benefit to true religion. Hereby the truth of it is manifested, and it appears to be indeed *true religion:* they, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish between true religion and false, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of *trials*, in the verse nextly preceding the text, and in innumerable other places: they try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or no. And the faith of true Christians being thus tried and proved to be true, is *found to praise, and honour, and glory;* as in that preceding verse.

And then, these trials are of further benefit to true religion; they not only manifest the *truth* of it, but they make its genuine *beauty* and *amiableness* remarkably to appear. True virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed: and the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials: then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold; and upon this account, is *found to praise, and honour, and glory.*

And again, another benefit that such trials are of to true religion, is, that they purify and increase it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those mixtures of that which is false, which incumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause the amiableness of true religion to appear to the best advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its lustre and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire, is purged from its alloy, and all remainders of dross, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious; and thus also is *found unto praise, and honour, and glory*. The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benefits, that persecutions are of to true religion, in the verse preceding the text.

And in the text, the apostle observes how true religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their persecutions, whereby these benefits of persecution appeared in them; or what manner of operation of true religion, in them, it was, whereby their religion, under persecution, was manifested to be *true* religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine *beauty* and *amiableness* of true religion, and also appeared to be *increased* and *purified*, and so was like to be *found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ*. And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these benefits appeared.

1. *Love to Christ; Whom having not seen, ye love.* The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of sense. They seemed to the men of the world about them, as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view, that could induce them thus to suffer, and support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something *unseen*; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually, whom

whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.

2. *Joy in Christ.* Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with chearfulness.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, *viz.* by faith; which is the evidence of things not seen; *In whom, though now ye see him not, yet* believing, *ye rejoice.*— 2. The nature of this joy; *unspeakable, and full of glory. Unspeakable* in the *kind* of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime, and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the sublimity and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. Unspeakable also in *degree;* it pleasing God to give them this holy joy, with a liberal hand, and in large measure, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was *full of glory.* Although the joy was unspeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it; yet something might be said of it, and no words more fit to represent its excellency than these, that it was *full of glory;* or, as it is in the original, *glorified joy.* In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious brightness, and their natures exalted and perfected. It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it: it was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness; it filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made them themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise from these words is this,

DOCT. *True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.*

We see that the apostle, in observing and remarking the operations and exercises of religion, in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their religion appeared to be true and of the right kind, when it had its greatest trial of what sort it was, being tried by persecution as gold is tried in the fire, and when their religion not only proved true, but was most pure, and cleansed

from its droſs and mixtures of that which was not true, and when religion appeared in them moſt in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praiſe, and honour, and glory; he ſingles out the religious affections of *love* and *joy*, that were then in exerciſe in them: theſe are the exerciſes of religion he takes notice of, wherein their religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper glory.

Here I would,

I. Shew what is intended by the *affections*.

II. Obſerve ſome things which make it evident, that a great part of true religion lies in the affections.

I. It may be inquired, what the affections of the mind are? I anſwer, The affections are no other, than the more vigorous and ſenſible exerciſes of the inclination and will of the ſoul.

God has endued the ſoul with two faculties: One is that by which it is capable of perception and ſpeculation, or by which it diſcerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the underſtanding. The other faculty is that by which the ſoul does not merely perceive and view things, but is ſome way inclined with reſpect to the things it views or conſiders; either is inclined *to them*, or is diſinclined, and averſe *from them*: or is the faculty by which the ſoul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected ſpectator, but either as liking or diſliking, pleaſed or diſpleaſed, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: it is ſometimes called the *inclination*: and, as it has reſpect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *will*: and the mind, with regard to the exerciſes of this faculty, is often called the *heart*.

The exerciſes of this faculty are of two ſorts; either thoſe by which the ſoul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in *approving* of them, being pleaſed with them, and inclined to them; or thoſe in which the ſoul oppoſes the things that are in view, in *diſapproving* them, and in being diſpleaſed with them, averſe from them, and rejecting them.

And as the exerciſes of the inclination and will of the ſoul are various in their *kinds*, ſo they are much more various in their *degrees*. There are ſome exerciſes of pleaſedneſs or diſpleaſedneſs, inclination or diſinclination, wherein the ſoul is carried but a little beyond a ſtate of perfect indifference. And there are other degrees above this, wherein the approbation or diſlike, pleaſedneſs or averſion, are ſtronger; wherein we may riſe

riſe higher and higher, till the ſoul comes to act vigorouſly and ſenſibly, and the actings of the ſoul are with that ſtrength, that (through the laws of the union which the Creator has fixed between ſoul and body) the motion of the blood and animal ſpirits begins to be ſenſibly altered; whence oftentimes ariſes ſome bodily ſenſation, eſpecially about the heart and vitals, that are the fountain of the fluids of the body: from whence it comes to paſs, that the mind, with regard to the exerciſes of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called *the heart*. And it is to be noted, that they are theſe more vigorous and ſenſible exerciſes of this faculty, that are called the *affections*.

The *will*, and the *affections* of the ſoul, are not two faculties; the affections are not eſſentially diſtinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the ſoul, but only in the livelineſs and ſenſibleneſs of exerciſe.

It muſt be confeſſed, that language is here ſomewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a conſiderable meaſure looſe and unfixed, and not preciſely limited by cuſtom, which governs the uſe of language. In ſome ſenſe, the affection of the ſoul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exerciſe any further than it is *affected*; it is not moved out of a ſtate of perfect indifference, any otherwiſe than as it is *affected* one way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not ſo commonly called *affections*: in every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exerciſe of the will and inclination, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions: but all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not eſſentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exerciſe. In every act of the will whatſoever, the ſoul either likes or diſlikes, is either inclined or diſinclined to what is in view: theſe are not eſſentially different from thoſe affections of *love* and *hatred*: that liking or inclination of the ſoul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very ſame thing with the affection of *love*: and that diſliking and diſinclining, if in a great degree, is the very ſame with *hatred*. In every act of the will *for*, or *towards* ſomething not preſent, the ſoul is in ſome degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a conſiderable degree, is the very ſame with the affection of *deſire*. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the ſoul approves of ſomething preſent, there is a degree of pleaſedneſs; and that pleaſedneſs,

pleaſedneſs, if it be in a conſiderable degree, is the very ſame with the affection of *joy* or *delight*. And if the will diſapproves of what is preſent, the ſoul is in ſome degree diſpleaſed, and if that diſpleaſedneſs be great, it is the very ſame with the affection of *grief* or *ſorrow*.

Such ſeems to be our nature, and ſuch the laws of the union of ſoul and body, that there never is in any caſe whatſoever, any lively and vigorous exerciſe of the will or inclination of the ſoul, without ſome effect upon the body, in ſome alteration of the motion of its fluids, and eſpecially of the animal ſpirits. And on the other hand, from the ſame laws of the union of ſoul and body, the conſtitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exerciſe of the affections. But yet, it is not the body, but the mind only, that is the proper ſeat of the affections. The body of man is no more capable of being really the ſubject of love or hatred, joy or ſorrow, fear or hope, than the body of a tree, or than the ſame body of man is capable of thinking and underſtanding. As it is the ſoul only that has ideas, ſo it is the ſoul only that is pleaſed or diſpleaſed with its ideas. As it is the ſoul only that thinks, ſo it is the ſoul only that loves or hates, rejoices, or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are theſe motions of the animal ſpirits, and fluids of the body, any thing properly belonging to the nature of the affections; though they always accompany them, in the preſent ſtate; but are only effects or concomitants of the affections, that are entirely diſtinct from the affections themſelves, and no way eſſential to them; ſo that an unbodied ſpirit may be as capable of love and hatred, joy or ſorrow, hope or fear, or other affections, as one that is united to a body.

The *affections* and *paſſions* are frequently ſpoken of as the ſame; and yet, in the more common uſe of ſpeech, there is in ſome reſpect a difference; and *affection* is a word, that in its ordinary ſignification, ſeems to be ſomething more extenſive than *paſſion*, being uſed for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but paſſion for thoſe that are more ſudden, and whoſe effects on the animal ſpirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and leſs in its own command.

As all the exerciſes of the inclination and will, are either in approving and liking, or diſapproving and rejecting; ſo the affections are of two ſorts; they are thoſe by which the ſoul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving *to* it, or *ſeeking* it; or thoſe by which it is averſe *from* it, and *oppoſes* it.

Of the former ſort are *love*, *deſire*, *hope*, *joy*, *gratitude*, *complacence*.

*placence.* Of the latter kind, are *hatred*, *fear*, *anger*, *grief*, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some affections wherein there is a composition of each of the aforementioned kinds of actings of the will; as in the affection of *pity*, there is something of the *former kind*, towards the person suffering, and something of the *latter*, towards what he suffers. And so in *zeal*, there is in it high *approbation* of some person or thing, together with vigorous *opposition* to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed affections that might be also mentioned, but I hasten to

II. The second thing proposed, which was, to observe some things that render it evident, that true religion, in great part, consists in the affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the nature of the affections, makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this matter out of doubt: for who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the *inclination* and *will* of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the *heart?*

That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wouldings, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, *fervent in spirit*, and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Rom. xii. 11. *Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Deut. x. 12. *And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?* And chap. vi. 4. 5. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* It is such a fervent, vigorous engagedness of the heart in religion, that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life; Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live.*

If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness

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in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigour in the actings of our inclinations so requisite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place, in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it. Hence true religion is called the *power of godliness*, in distinction from the external appearances of it, that are *the form* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it.* The Spirit of God, in those that have sound and solid religion, is a spirit of powerful holy affection; and therefore, God is said *to have given them the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving influences, are said to be *baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*; by reason of the power and fervour of those exercises the Spirit of God excites in their hearts, whereby their hearts, when grace is in exercise, may be said to *burn within them*; as is said of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 32.

The business of religion is, from time to time, compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to have their hearts and strength greatly exercised and engaged; such as running, wrestling or agonizing for a great prize or crown, and fighting with strong enemies that seek our lives, and warring as those that by violence take a city or kingdom.

And though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigour, that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: for every true disciple of Christ, *loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands; yea, than his own life.* From hence it follows, that where-ever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects: but by what was said before, the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will, are no other than the affections of the soul.

2. The Author of the human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the spring of mens actions.

actions. As the affections do not only neceſſarily belong to the human nature, but are a very great part of it; ſo (inaſmuch as by regeneration, perſons are renewed in the whole man, and ſanctified throughout) holy affections do not only neceſſarily belong to true religion, but are a very great part of that. And as true religion is of a practical nature, and God hath ſo conſtituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the ſpring of mens actions, this alſo ſhews, that true religion muſt conſiſt very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very unactive, any otherwiſe than he is influenced by ſome affection, either *love* or *hatred*, *deſire*, *hope*, *fear*, or ſome other. Theſe affections we ſee to be the ſprings that ſet men a-going, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their purſuits: theſe are the things that put men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly buſineſs; and eſpecially are men excited and animated by theſe, in all affairs, wherein they are earneſtly engaged, and which they purſue with vigour. We ſee the world of mankind to be exceeding buſy and active; and the affections of men are the ſprings of the motion: take away all *love* and *hatred*, all *hope* and *fear*, all *anger*, *zeal*, and affectionate *deſire*, and the world would be, in a great meaſure, motionleſs and dead; there would be no ſuch thing as activity amongſt mankind, or any earneſt purſuit whatſoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits, in his purſuits; and it is by the affections, that the ambitious man is put forward in his purſuit of worldly glory; and it is the affections alſo that actuate the voluptuous man, in his purſuit of pleaſure and ſenſual delights: the world continues, from age to age, in a continual commotion and agitation, in a purſuit of theſe things; but take away all affection, and the ſpring of all this motion would be gone, and the motion itſelf would ceaſe. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the ſpring of mens motion and action; ſo in religious matters, the ſpring of their actions are very much religious affections: he that has doctrinal knowledge and ſpeculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the buſineſs of religion.

3. Nothing is more manifeſt *in fact*, than that the things of religion take hold of mens ſouls, no further than they *affect* them. There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of thoſe things that are infinitely great and important, and that moſt nearly concern them, and all that is heard ſeems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make

no alteration in their disposition or behaviour; and the reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his almighty power, and boundless wisdom, his infinite majesty, and that holiness of God, by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and the heavens are not pure in his sight, and of God's infinite goodness and mercy, and hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power and goodness, wherein there appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great things of another world, of eternal misery, in bearing the fierceness and wrath of almighty God, and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his dear love; they also hear the peremptory commands of God, and his gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invitations of the gospel; I say, they often hear these things, and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible alteration on them, either in heart or practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be so till they are affected. I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any one person, by any thing of a religious nature, that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his affections moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation; never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deservings of God's displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And, in a word, there never was any thing considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.

4. The holy scriptures do every where place religion very much in the affections; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The scriptures place much of religion in godly *fear*; insomuch

much that it is often ſpoken of as the character of thoſe that are truly religious perſons, that *they tremble at God's word*, that they *fear before him*, that *their fleſh trembles for fear of him*, and that *they are afraid of his judgements*, that *his excellency makes them afraid, and his dread falls upon them*; and the like: and a compellation commonly given the ſaints in ſcripture, is, *fearers of God*, or *they that fear the Lord*. And becauſe the fear of God is a great part of true godlineſs, hence true godlineſs in general, is very commonly called by the name of *the fear of God*; as every one knows, that knows any thing of the Bible.

So *hope* in God and in the promiſes of his word, is often ſpoken of in the ſcripture, as a very conſiderable part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion conſiſts, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is alſo frequently mentioned as the character of the ſaints: Pſal. cxlvi. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* Jer. xvii 7. *Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is.* Pſal. xxxi 24. *Be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.* And the like in many other places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly conſtituting the character of the true ſaints; Pſal. xxxiii. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that* fear *him, upon them that* hope *in his mercy.* Pſal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleaſure in them that* fear *him, in thoſe that* hope *in his mercy.* Hope is ſo great a part of true religion, that the apoſtle ſays *we are ſaved by hope*, Rom. viii 24. And this is ſpoken of as the helmet of the Chriſtian ſoldier, 1 Theſſ. v. 8. *And for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation*; and the ſure and ſtedfaſt anchor of the ſoul, which preſerves it from being caſt away by the ſtorms of this evil world, Heb. vi. 9. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entereth into that within the vail.* It is ſpoken of as a great fruit and benefit which true ſaints receive by Chriſt's reſurrection, 1 Pet. i. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.*

The ſcriptures place religion very much in the affection of *love*, in love to God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifeſt, both in the Old Teſtament and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary affection of *hatred* alſo, as having ſin for its object, is ſpoken of in ſcripture, as no inconſiderable part of

true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished, Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.* And accordingly the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Psal. xcvii. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.* And the psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; Psal. ci. 2. 3. *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside.* Psal. cxix. 104. *I hate every false way.* So ver. 128. Again Psal. cxxxix. 21. *Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?*

So holy *desire*, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in scripture as an important part of true religion; Is. xxvi. 8. *The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.* Psal xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.* Psal. xlii. 1. 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* Psal. lxiii. 1. 2. *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* Psal. lxxxiv. 1. 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* Psal. cxix 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgements at all times.* So Psal. lxxiii. 25. and cxliii. 6. 7. and cxxx. 6. Cant iii. 1. 2. and vi. 8. Such a holy desire and thirst of soul is mentioned, as one of those great things which renders or denotes a man truly blessed, in the beginning of Christ's sermon on the mount, Matth. v. 6. *Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* And this holy thirst is spoken of, as a great thing in the condition of a participation of the blessings of eternal life, Rev. xxi. 6. *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

The scriptures speak of holy *joy*, as a great part of true religion. So it is represented in the text. And as an important part of religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed, with great earnestness; Psal. xxxvii. 4. *Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* Psal. xcvii. 12. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous.* So Psal. xxxiii. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.* Matth. v. 12. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad*

*glad.* Phil. iii. 1. *Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* And chap. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.* 1 Theſſ. v. 16. *Rejoice evermore.* Pſal. cxlix. 2. *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace, Gal. v. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,* &c.—The pſalmiſt mentions his holy joy, as an evidence of his ſincerity, Pſal. cxix. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches.*

Religious *ſorrow*, mourning, and brokenneſs of heart, are alſo frequently ſpoken of as a great part of true religion. Theſe things are often mentioned as diſtinguiſhing qualities of the true ſaints, and a great part of their character; Matth. v. 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.* Pſal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart: and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit.* Iſ. lxi. 1. 2. *The Lord hath anointed me—to bind up the broken-hearted,—to comfort all that mourn.* This godly ſorrow and brokenneſs of heart is often ſpoken of, not only as a great thing in the diſtinguiſhing character of the ſaints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleaſing to God; Pſal li. 17. *The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Iſ. lvii. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Chap. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit.*

Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exerciſe of which much of true religion appears, is *gratitude;* eſpecially as exerciſed in thankfulneſs and praiſe to God. This being ſo much ſpoken of in the book of Pſalms, and other parts of the holy ſcriptures, I need not mention particular texts.

Again, the holy ſcriptures do frequently ſpeak of *compaſſion* or *mercy*, as a very great and eſſential thing in true religion; inſomuch that good men are in ſcripture denominated from hence; and a merciful man, and a good man, are equivalent terms in ſcripture; Iſ. lvii. 1. *The* righteous *periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and* merciful men *are taken away.* And the ſcripture chooſes out this quality, as that by which, in a peculiar manner, a righteous man in decyphered; Pſal. xxxvii. 21. *The* righteous *ſheweth* mercy, *and giveth;* and ver. 26. *He is ever* merciful, *and lendeth.* And Prov. xiv. 31. *He that honoureth the Lord, hath mercy on the poor.* And Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the*

*the elect of God, holy and beloved*, bowels of mercies, &c. This is one of those great things, by which those who are truly blessed are described by our Saviour, Matth. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law, Matth. xxiii. 23. *Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement*, mercy, *and faith.* To the like purpose is that, Mic. vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love* mercy, *and walk humbly with thy God?* And also that, Hos. vi 6 *For I desired* mercy, *and not sacrifice.* Which seems to have been a text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his manner of citing it once and again, Matth. ix. 13. and xii. 7.

*Zeal* is also spoken of, as a very essential part of the religion of true saints. It is spoken of as a great thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our redemption, Tit. ii 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people*, zealous *of good works.* And this is spoken of, as the great thing wanting in the lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15 16. 19.

I have mentioned but a few texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the scripture, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to shew that they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion.

5. The scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in *love*, the chief of the affections, and fountain of all other affections.

So our blessed Saviour represents the matter, in answer to the lawyer, who asked him, which was the great commandment of the law, Matth. xxii. 37.—40. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commanament. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Which last words signify as much, as that these two commandments comprehend all the duty prescribed, and the religion taught in the law and the prophets. And the apostle Paul does from time to time make the same

representation

repreſentation of the matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8. *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.* And ver. 10. *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* And Gal. v. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* So likewiſe in 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart,* &c. So the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks of love, as the greateſt thing in religion, and as the vitals, eſſence and ſoul of it; without which, the greateſt knowledge and gifts, and the moſt glaring profeſſion, and every thing elſe which appertains to religion, are vain and worthleſs; and repreſents it as the fountain from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 Cor. xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered *charity*, in the original is αγαπη, the proper Engliſh of which is *love*.

Now, although it be true, that the love thus ſpoken of, includes the whole of a ſincerely benevolent propenſity of the ſoul, towards God and man; yet it may be conſidered, that it is evident from what has been before obſerved, that this propenſity or inclination of the ſoul, when in ſenſible and vigorous exerciſe, becomes *affection*, and is no other than affectionate love. And ſurely it is ſuch vigorous and fervent love which Chriſt ſpeaks of, as the ſum of all religion, when he ſpeaks of loving God with all our hearts, with all our ſouls, and with all our minds, and our neighbour as ourſelves, as the ſum of all that was taught and preſcribed in the law and the prophets.

Indeed it cannot be ſuppoſed, when this affection of love is here, and in other ſcriptures, ſpoken of as the ſum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, excluſive of the habit, or that the exerciſe of the underſtanding is excluded, which is implied in all reaſonable affection. But it is doubtleſs true, and evident from theſe ſcriptures, that the *eſſence* of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affection, and an habitual diſpoſition to it, and that light which is the foundation of it, and thoſe things which are the fruits of it, conſiſts the *whole* of religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion conſiſts in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the firſt and chief of the affections, and the fountain of all the affections. From *love* ariſes *hatred* of thoſe things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppoſe and thwart us in thoſe things that we delight in: and from the various exerciſes of love and hatred, according to the circumſtances of the objects of theſe affections, as preſent

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or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, arise all those other affections of *desire*, *hope*, *fear*, *joy*, *grief*, *gratitude*, *anger*, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent *love to God*, will necessarily arise other *religious* affections; hence will arise an intense *hatred* and abhorrence of sin, *fear* of sin, and a *dread* of God's displeasure, *gratitude* to God for his goodness, *complacence* and *joy* in God when God is graciously and sensibly present, and *grief* when he is absent, and a joyful *hope* when a future enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent *zeal* for the glory of God. And in like manner, from a fervent *love to men*, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men.

6. The religion of the most eminent saints we have an account of in the scripture, consisted much in holy *affections*.

I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, which have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, and so described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, that are a part of the sacred canon.

The *first* instance I shall take notice of, is David, that *man after God's own heart*; who has given us a lively portraiture of his religion in the book of Psalms. Those holy songs of his he has there left us, are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy *affections*: such as an humble and fervent *love* to God, *admiration* of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest *desires*, thirstings, and pantings of soul after God, *delight* and *joy* in God, a sweet and melting *gratitude* to God for his great goodness, an holy *exultation* and triumph of soul in the favour, sufficiency, and faithfulness of God, his *love* to, and *delight* in the saints the excellent of the earth, his great *delight* in the word and ordinances of God, his *grief* for his own and others sins, and his fervent *zeal* for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection, which the psalms of David are every where full of, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the

*psalmist*

*pſalmiſt of Iſrael*, as the ſubordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worſhip and praiſes; and in many of the pſalms, ſpeaks in the name of Chriſt, as perſonating him in theſe breathings forth of holy affection; and in many other pſalms, he ſpeaks in the name of the church.

Another inſtance I ſhall obſerve, is the apoſtle Paul; who was, in many reſpects, the chief of all the miniſters of the New Teſtament; being above all others, a choſen veſſel unto Chriſt, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and made the chief inſtrument of propagating and eſtabliſhing the Chriſtian church in the world, and of diſtinctly revealing the glorious myſteries of the goſpel, for the inſtruction of the church in all ages; and (as has not been improbably thought by ſome) the moſt eminent ſervant of Chriſt, that ever lived, received to the higheſt rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Maſter. By what is ſaid of him in the ſcripture, he appears to have been a perſon that was full of affection. And it is very manifeſt, that the religion he expreſſes in his epiſtles, conſiſted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expreſſions of himſelf, that he was, in the courſe of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely ſwallowed up, by a moſt ardent *love* to his glorious Lord, eſteeming all things as loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and eſteeming them but dung that he might win him. He repreſents himſelf, as overpowered by this holy affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his ſervice, through all difficulties and ſufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. And his epiſtles are full of expreſſions of an overflowing affection towards the people of Chriſt: he ſpeaks of his *dear love* to them, 2 Cor. xii. 19. Phil. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 2.; of his *abundant love*, 2 Cor. ii. 4.; and of his *affectionate and tender love*, as of a nurſe towards her children, 1 Theſſ. ii. 7. 8. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children: ſo, being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.* So alſo he ſpeaks of his *bowels of love*, Phil. i. 8. Philem. 5. 12. and 20. So he ſpeaks of his *earneſt care* for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16. and of his *bowels of pity* or *mercy* towards them, Phil. ii. 1.; and of his concern for others, even to *anguiſh of heart*, 2 Cor. ii. 4. *For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* He ſpeaks of the *great conflict* of his ſoul for them, Col. ii. 1. He ſpeaks of *great and continual grief* that he had *in his heart* from *compaſſion* to the Jews, Rom. ix. 2. He ſpeaks of *his mouth's being*

*opened, and his heart enlarged* towards Chriſtians, 2 Cor. vi. 11. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.* He often ſpeaks of his *affectionate and longing deſires*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 8. Rom. i. 11. Phil. i. 8. and Chap. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 4. The ſame apoſtle is very often, in his epiſtles, expreſſing the affection of *joy*, 2 Cor i. 12. and Chap. vii. 7. and ver. 9. 16. Phil. i. 4. and Chap. ii. 1. 2. and Chap. iii. 3. Col. i. 24. 1 Theſſ. iii 9. He ſpeaks of his *rejoicing with great joy*, Phil. iv. 10. Philem. 1. 7. of his *joying and rejoicing*, Phil. ii. 1. 7. and of his *rejoicing exceedingly*, 2 Cor. vii. 13. and of his being *filled with comfort, and being exceeding joyful*, 2 Cor. vii. 4 He ſpeaks of himſelf as *always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. So he ſpeaks of the *triumphs* of his ſoul, 2 Cor. ii. 14. and of *his glorying in tribulation*, 2 Theſſ. i. 4. and Rom. v. 3. He alſo expreſſes the affection of *hope;* in Phil. i. 20. he ſpeaks of his *earneſt expectation*, and *his hope*. He likewiſe expreſſes an affection of *godly jealouſy*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. 3. And it appears by his whole hiſtory, after his converſion, in the Acts, and alſo by all his epiſtles, and the accounts he gives of himſelf there, that the affection of *zeal*, as having the cauſe of his Maſter, and the intereſt and proſperity of his church, for its object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his heart, ſtrongly engaging to thoſe great and conſtant labours he went through, in inſtructing, exhorting, warning, and reproving others, *travailing in birth with them;* conflicting with thoſe powerful and innumerable enemies who continually oppoſed him, wreſtling with principalities and powers, not fighting as one who beats the air, running the race ſet before him, continually preſſing forwards through all manner of difficulties and ſufferings; ſo that others thought him quite beſide himſelf. And how full he was of affection, does further appear by his being ſo full of tears: in 2 Cor. ii. 4. he ſpeaks of his *many tears*; and ſo Acts xx. 19. and of his *tears* that he ſhed *continually, night and day*, ver. 31.

Now if any one can conſider theſe accounts given in the ſcripture of this great apoſtle, and which he gives of himſelf, and yet not ſee that his religion conſiſted much in affection, muſt have a ſtrange faculty of managing his eyes, to ſhut out the light which ſhines moſt full in his face.

The other inſtance I ſhall mention, is of the apoſtle John, that beloved diſciple, who was the neareſt and deareſt to his Maſter of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greateſt privileges of any of them; being not only one of the three who were admitted to be preſent with him in the mount

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at his transfiguration, and at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of the Christian church; but was favoured above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom, at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensations towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the book of *Revelation;* and to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the Christian church, after their death.

It is evident by all his writings, (as is generally observed by divines), that he was a person remarkably full of affection: his addresses to those whom he wrote to, being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God sent into the world, to be the light of the world, and head of the whole church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue, for the imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole flock should follow where-ever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate heart; and his virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections. He was the greatest instance of ardency, vigour and strength of *love*, to both God and man, that ever was. It was these affections which got the victory, in that mighty struggle and conflict of his affections, in his agonies, when *he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears*, and wrestled in tears and in blood. Such was the power of the exercises of his holy love, that they were stronger than death, and in that great struggle, overcame those strong exercises of the natural affections of fear and grief, when he was sore amazed, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he also appeared to be full of affection, in the course of his life. We read of his great *zeal*, fulfilling that in the 69th Psalm, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, John ii. 17. We read of his *grief* for the sins of men, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;* and his breaking forth in tears and exclamations, from the consideration of the sin and misery of ungodly men, and on the sight of the city of Jerusalem, which was full of such inhabitants, Luke xix. 41.

42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it: saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* With Chap. xiii 34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?* We read of Christ's earnest *desire*, Luke xxii. 15. *With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* We often read of the affection of *pity* or *compassion* in Christ, Matth. xv. 32. and xviii. 34. Luke vii. 13. and of his *being moved with compassion*, Matth. ix. 36. and xiv. 14. and Mark vi. 34. And how tender did his heart appear to be, on occasion of Mary's and Martha's mourning for their brother, and coming to him with their complaints and tears? their tears soon drew tears from his eyes; he was affected with their grief, and *wept* with them; though he knew their sorrow should so soon be turned into joy, by their brother's being raised from the dead; see John xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven disciples the evening before he was crucified; when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great difficulties and sufferings they should meet with in the world, when he was gone; and comforted and counselled them, as his dear little children; and bequeathed to them his Holy Spirit, and therein his peace, and his comfort and joy, as it were in his last will and testament, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; and concluded the whole with that affectionate intercessory prayer for them, and his whole church, in chap. xvii. Of all the discourses ever penned, or uttered by the mouth of any man, this seems to be the most affectionate, and affecting.

8. The religion of heaven consists very much in affection.

There is doubtless true religion in heaven, and true religion in its utmost purity and perfection. But according to the scripture representation of the heavenly state, the religion of heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty *love* and *joy*, and the expression of these in most fervent and exalted praises. So that the religion of the saints in heaven, consists in the same things with that religion of the saints on earth, which is spoken of in our text, viz. *love*, and *joy unspeakable, and full of glory*. Now, it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the saints in heaven be not united to flesh and blood, and have no animal fluids to be moved (through the laws of union of soul and body) with

these

thoſe great emotions of their ſouls, that therefore their exceeding love and joy are no affections.—We are not ſpeaking of the affections of the body, but of the affections of the ſoul, the chief of which are *love* and *joy*. When theſe are in the ſoul, whether that be in the body or out of it, the ſoul is affected and moved. And when they are in the ſoul, in that ſtrength in which they are in the ſaints in heaven, the ſoul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the ſame thing, has great affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what love and joy are in a ſoul out of a body, or in a glorified body; *i. e.* we have not had experience of love and joy in a ſoul in theſe circumſtances; but the ſaints on earth do know what divine love and joy in the ſoul are, and they know what love and joy are of the ſame kind with the love and joy which are in heaven, in ſeparate ſouls there. The love and joy of the ſaints on earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and bleſſedneſs of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the ſame in nature, though not the ſame with it, or like to it, in degree and circumſtances. This is evident by many ſcriptures, as Prov. iv. 18. John iv. 14. and chap. vi. 40. 47. 50. 51. 54. 58. 1 John iii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 8.—12. It is unreaſonable therefore to ſuppoſe, that the love and joy of the ſaints in heaven, not only differ in degree and circumſtances, from the holy love and joy of the ſaints on earth, but is ſo entirely different in nature, that they are no affections; and merely becauſe they have no blood and animal ſpirits to be ſet in motion by them, which motion of the blood and animal ſpirits is not of the eſſence of theſe affections, in men on the earth, but the effect of them; although by their reaction they may make ſome circumſtantial difference in the ſenſation of the mind. There is a ſenſation of the mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any effects on the fluids of the body; and this ſenſation of the mind, therefore, does not depend on theſe motions in the body, and ſo may be in the ſoul without the body. And where ever there are the exerciſes of love and joy, there is that ſenſation of the mind, whether it be in the body, or out; and that inward ſenſation, or kind of ſpiritual ſenſe, or feeling, and motion of the ſoul, is what is called affection: the ſoul when it thus feels, (if I may ſo ſay), and is thus moved, is ſaid to be affected, and eſpecially when this inward ſenſation and motion are to a very high degree, as they are in the ſaints in heaven. If we can learn any thing of the ſtate of heaven from the ſcripture, the love and joy that the ſaints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impreſſing the

the heart with the ſtrongeſt and moſt lively ſenſation of inexpreſſible ſweetneſs, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a flame of fire. And if ſuch love and joy be not affections, then the word *affection* is of no uſe in language.—Will any ſay, that the ſaints in heaven, in beholding the face of their Father, and the glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful works, and particularly his laying down his life for them, have their hearts nothing moved and affected by all which they behold or conſider?

Hence, therefore, the *religion of heaven*, conſiſting chiefly in holy love and joy, conſiſts very much in affection: and therefore, undoubtedly, *true religion* conſiſts very much in affection. The way to learn the true nature of any thing, is to go where that thing is to be found in its purity and perfection. If we would know the nature of true gold, we muſt view it, not in the oar, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true religion is, we muſt go where there is true religion, and nothing but true religion, and in its higheſt perfection, without any defect or mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this world, they are ſtrangers here, and belong to heaven; they are born from above, heaven is their native country, and the nature which they receive by this heavenly birth, is an heavenly nature, they receive *an anointing from above;* that principle of true religion which is in them, is a communication of the religion of heaven; their grace is the dawn of glory; and God fits them for that world by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the nature and deſign of the ordinances and duties, which God hath appointed, as means and expreſſions of true religion.

To inſtance in the duty of prayer: It is manifeſt, we are not appointed, in this duty, to declare God's perfections, his majeſty, holineſs, goodneſs, and all-ſufficiency, and our own meanneſs, emptineſs, dependence, and unworthineſs, and our wants and deſires, to inform God of theſe things, or to incline his heart, and prevail with him to be willing to ſhew us mercy; but ſuitably to affect our own hearts with the things we expreſs, and ſo to prepare us to receive the bleſſings we aſk. And ſuch geſtures, and manner of external behaviour in the worſhip of God, which cuſtom has made to be ſignifications of humility and reverence, can be of no further uſe, than as they have ſome tendency to affect our own hearts, or the hearts of others.

And

And the duty of ſinging praiſes to God, ſeems to be appointed wholly to excite and expreſs religious affections. No other reaſon can be aſſigned, why we ſhould expreſs ourſelves to God in verſe, rather than in proſe, and do it with muſic, but only, that ſuch is our nature and frame, that theſe things have a tendency to move our affections.

The ſame thing appears in the nature and deſign of the ſacraments, which God hath appointed. God conſidering our frame, hath not only appointed that we ſhould be told of the great things of the goſpel, and of the redemption of Chriſt, and inſtructed in them by his word; but alſo that they ſhould be, as it were, exhibited to our view, in ſenſible repreſentations, in the ſacraments, the more to affect us with them.

And the impreſſing divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained, that his word delivered in the holy ſcriptures, ſhould be opened, applied, and ſet home upon men, in preaching. And therefore it does not anſwer the aim which God had in this inſtitution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expoſitions on the ſcripture, and other good books of divinity; becauſe, although theſe may tend, as well as preaching, to give men a good doctrinal or ſpeculative underſtanding of the things of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impreſs them on mens hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular, and lively application of his word to men, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect ſinners with the importance of the things of religion, and their own miſery, and neceſſity of a remedy, and the glory and ſufficiency of a remedy provided; and to ſtir up the pure minds of the ſaints, and quicken their affections, by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and ſetting them before them in their proper colours, though they know them, and have been fully inſtructed in them already, 2 Pet. i 12. 13. And particularly, to promote thoſe two affections in them, which are ſpoken of in the text, *love* and *joy: Chriſt gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers; that the body of Chriſt might be edified in love*, Eph. iv. 11. 12. 16. The apoſtle, in inſtructing and counſelling Timothy, concerning the work of the miniſtry, informs him, that the great end of that word which a miniſter is to preach, is *love* or *charity*, 1 Tim. i. 3. 4. 5. And another affection which God has appointed preaching as a means to promote in the ſaints, is *joy*; and therefore miniſters are called *helpers of their joy*, 2 Cor. i. 24.

10. It

10. It is an evidence that true religion, or holiness of heart, lies very much in the affection of the heart, that the scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in *hardness of heart*. Thus the scriptures do every where. It was hardness of heart, which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the Jews, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* It is from mens having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves; Rom. ii. 5. *After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.* The reason given why the house of Israel would not obey God, was, that they were hard-hearted; Ezek. iii. 7. *But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.* The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is ascribed to the hardness of their hearts Psal. xcv. 7.—10. *To-day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work: forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart,* &c.—This is spoken of as what prevented Zedekiah's turning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. *He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Israel* This principle is spoken of, as that from whence men are without the fear of God, and depart from God's ways: Is. lxiii. 17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our heart from thy fear?* And mens rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this principle; Acts xix. 9. *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude.*—God's leaving men to the power of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by God's hardening their hearts; Rom. ix. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.* John xii. 40. *He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts.* And the apostle seems to speak of *an evil heart, that departs from the living God*, and *a hard heart*, as the same thing, Heb. iii. 8. *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation*, &c. ver. 12. 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily while it is called, To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering

vering a perſon from the power of ſin, and mortifying corruption, is expreſſed, once and again, by God's *taking away the heart of ſtone, and giving an heart of fleſh*, Ezek. xi. 19. and chap. xxxvi. 26.

Now, by a hard heart, is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not eaſy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a ſtone, inſenſible, ſtupid, unmoved, and hard to be impreſſed. Hence the hard heart is called a *ſtony heart*, and is oppoſed to an *heart of fleſh*, that has feeling, and is ſenſibly touched and moved. We read in ſcripture of a *hard heart*, and a *tender heart*: and doubtleſs we are to underſtand theſe, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is eaſily impreſſed with what ought to affect it? God commends Joſiah, becauſe his heart was tender: and it is evident by thoſe things which are mentioned as expreſſions and evidences of this tenderneſs of heart, that by his heart being tender is meant, his heart being eaſily moved with religious and pious affection; 2 Kings xxii. 19. *Becauſe thine heart was tender, and thou haſt humbled thyſelf before the Lord, when thou heardſt what I ſpake againſt this place, and againſt the inhabitants thereof, that they ſhould become a deſolation and a curſe, and haſt rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I alſo have heard thee, ſaith the Lord.* And this is one thing, wherein it is neceſſary we ſhould *become as little children, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God*, even that we ſhould have our hearts tender, and eaſily affected and moved in ſpiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in ſome places, in the texts themſelves, that by hardneſs of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So, to ſignify the oſtrich's being without natural affection to her young, it is ſaid, Job xxxix. 16. *She hardeneth her heart againſt her young ones, as though they were not hers.* So a perſon having a heart unaffected in time of danger, is expreſſed by his hardening his heart, Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart, ſhall fall into miſchief.*

Now therefore ſince it is ſo plain, that by a hard heart, in ſcripture, is meant a heart deſtitute of pious affections, and ſince alſo the ſcriptures do ſo frequently place the ſin and corruption of the heart in hardneſs of heart; it is evident, that the grace and holineſs of the heart, on the contrary, muſt, in a great meaſure, conſiſt in its having pious affections, and being eaſily ſuſceptive of ſuch affection. Divines are generally agreed, that ſin radically and fundamentally conſiſts in what is

negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holineſs. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be ſo that ſin does very much conſiſt in hardneſs of heart, and ſo in the want of pious affections of heart, holineſs does conſiſt very much *in thoſe pious affections*.

I am far from ſuppoſing that all affections do ſhew a tender heart: hatred, anger, vain-glory, and other ſelfiſh and ſelf-exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardeſt heart. But yet it is evident, that *hardneſs of heart*, and *tenderneſs of heart*, are expreſſions that relate to the affections of the heart, and denote the heart's being ſuſceptible of, or ſhut up againſt, *certain affections*; of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true religion lies very much in the affections. Not that I think theſe arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection, and preſent emotion of the mind: for undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true ſaints which is not ſpiritual; their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their ſeat in the body, yet the conſtitution of the body may very much contribute to the preſent emotion of the mind. And the degree of religion is rather to be judged of by the fixedneſs and ſtrength of the habit that is exerciſed in affection, whereby holy affection is habitual, than by the degree of the preſent exerciſe: and the ſtrength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifeſtations, or inward effects, in the hurry and vehemence, and ſudden changes of the courſe of the thoughts of the mind. But yet it is evident, that religion conſiſts ſo much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion: and no light in the underſtanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart; no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no ſuch exerciſe; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from ſuch exerciſes.

Having thus conſidered the evidence of the propoſition laid down, I proceed to ſome inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their error is, who are for diſcarding all religious affections, as having nothing ſolid or ſubſtantial in them.

There ſeems to be too much of a diſpoſition this way, prevailing

vailing in this land at this time. Becauſe many who, in the late extraordinary ſeaſon, appeared to have great religious affections, did not manifeſt a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the time of their affection, and the heat o their zeal; and becauſe the high affections of many ſeem to be ſo ſoon come to nothing, and ſome who ſeemed to be mightily raiſed and ſwallowed with joy and zeal, for a while, ſeem to have returned like the dog to his vomit: hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit with great numbers, as though true religion did not at all conſiſt in them. Thus we eaſily and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme; there was a prevalent diſpoſition to look upon all high religious affections as eminent exerciſes of true grace, without much inquiring into the nature and ſource of thoſe affections, and the manner in which they aroſe: if perſons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raiſed, ſo as to be full of religious talk, and expreſs themſelves with great warmth and earneſtneſs, and to be *filled*, or to be *very full*, as the phraſes were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude ſuch perſons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, inſtead of *eſteeming* and *admiring* all religious *affections*, *without diſtinction*, it is a thing much more prevalent, to *reject* and *diſcard* all *without diſtinction*. Herein appears the ſubtilty of Satan. While he ſaw that *affections* were much in vogue, knowing the greater part of the land were not verſed in ſuch things, and had not had much experience of great *religious affections*, to enable them to judge well of them, and diſtinguiſh between true and falſe; then he knew he could beſt play his game, by ſowing tares amongſt the wheat, and mingling *falſe affections* with the works of God's Spirit: he knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many ſouls, and greatly to wound religion in the ſaints, and entangle them in a dreadful wilderneſs, and by and by, to bring all religion into diſrepute. But now, when the ill conſequences of theſe *falſe affections* appear, and it is become very apparent, that ſome of thoſe emotions which made a glaring ſhew, and were by many greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the devil ſees it to be for his intereſt to go another way to work, and to endeavour to his utmoſt to propagate and eſtabliſh a perſuaſion, that all affections and ſenſible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and

carefully guarded againſt, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeleſs formality, and effectually ſhut out the power of godlineſs, and every thing which is ſpiritual, and to have all true Chriſtianity turned out of doors. For although to true religion, there muſt indeed be ſomething elſe beſides affection; yet true religion conſiſts ſo much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a ſtate of ſpiritual death, and is wholly deſtitute of the powerful, quickening, ſaving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion where there is nothing elſe but affection, ſo there is no true religion where there is no *religious affection.* As on the one hand, there muſt be light in the underſtanding, as well as an *affected* fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart: ſo on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head ſtored with notions and ſpeculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true ſpiritual knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly underſtood, they will affect the heart. The reaſon why men are not affected by ſuch infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of, in the word of God, is undoubtedly becauſe they are blind; if they were not ſo, it would be impoſſible, and utterly inconſiſtent with human nature, that their hearts ſhould be otherwiſe, than ſtrongly impreſſed, and greatly moved by ſuch things.

This manner of ſlighting all religious *affections*, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their ſtupidity and ſenſeleſſneſs, and to keep them in a ſtate of ſpiritual death as long as they live, and bring them at laſt to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice againſt *religious affections* at this day, in the land, is apparently of awful effect, to harden the hearts of ſinners, and damp the graces of many of the ſaints, and ſtund the life and power of religion, and preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a ſtate of dulneſs and apathy, and undoubtedly cauſes many perſons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work he has lately wrought in this land.

And for perſons to deſpiſe and cry down all religious *affections*, is the way to ſhut all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their ſouls.

They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not

not likely to have high affections themſelves. And let it be conſidered, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion. And they who condemn others for their *religious affections*, and have none themſelves, have no religion.

There are falſe *affections*, and there are true. A man's having *much affection*, does not prove that he has any true religion: but if he has *no affection*, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to diſtinguiſh between affections, approving ſome, and rejecting others; ſeparating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the droſs, the precious and the vile.

2. If it be ſo, that true religion lies much in the *affections*, hence we may infer, that ſuch means are to be deſired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and ſuch a way of preaching the word, and adminiſtration of ordinances, and ſuch a way of worſhipping God in prayer, and ſinging praiſes, is much to be deſired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of thoſe who attend theſe means.

Such a kind of means would formerly have been highly approved of, and applauded by the generality of the people of the land, as the moſt excellent and profitable, and having the greateſt tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace. But the prevailing taſte ſeems of late ſtrangely to be altered: that pathetical manner of praying and preaching, which would formerly have been admired and extolled, and that for this reaſon, becauſe it had ſuch a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites diſguſt, and moves no other affections, than thoſe of diſpleaſure and contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the generality (at leaſt of the common people) were in the extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate addreſs, in public performances: but now, a very great part of the people ſeem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there may be ſuch means, as may have a great tendency to ſtir up the paſſions of weak and ignorant perſons, and yet have no great tendency to benefit their ſouls: for though they may have a tendency to excite affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious affections, or any affections tending to grace. But undoubtedly, if the things of religion, in the means uſed, are treated according to their nature, and exhibited truly, ſo as tends to convey juſt apprehenſions, and a right judgement of them; the more they have a tendency to move the affections, the better.

3. If

3. If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cauſe we have to be aſhamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been ſaid, that this ariſes from our having ſo little true religion.

God has given to mankind affections, for the ſame purpoſe which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human ſoul for, *viz.* that they might be ſubſervient to man's chief end, and the great buſineſs for which God has created him, that is, the buſineſs of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exerciſed and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In things which concern mens worldly intereſt, their outward delights, their honour and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their deſires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in theſe things their hearts are tender and ſenſible, eaſily moved, deeply impreſſed, much concerned, very ſenſibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depreſſed with grief at worldly loſſes, and highly raiſed with joy at worldly ſucceſſes and proſperity. But how inſenſible and unmoved are moſt men, about the great things of another world! how dull are their affections! how heavy and hard their hearts in theſe matters! here their love is cold, their deſires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude ſmall. How they can ſit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a ſacrifice for the ſins of men, and of the unparallelled love of the innocent, holy and tender Lamb of God, manifeſted in his dying agonies, his bloody ſweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deſerved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unſpeakable and everlaſting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, inſenſible, and regardleſs! Where are the exerciſes of our affections proper, if not here? what is it that does more require them? and what can be a fit occaſion of their lively and vigorous exerciſe, if not ſuch an one as this? can any thing be ſet in our view, greater and more important? any thing more wonderful and ſurpriſing? or more nearly concerning our intereſt? Can we ſuppoſe the wiſe Creator implanted ſuch principles in the human nature as the affections, to be of uſe to us, and to be exerciſed on certain proper occaſions, but to lie ſtill on ſuch an occaſion as this? can any Chriſtian, who believes the truth of theſe things, entertain ſuch thoughts?

If we ought ever to exerciſe our affections at all, and if the Creator

Creator has not unwiſely conſtituted the human nature, in making theſe principles a part of it, when they are vain and uſeleſs; then they ought to be exerciſed about thoſe objects which are moſt worthy of them. But is there any thing, which Chriſtians can find in heaven or earth, ſo worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earneſt and longing deſires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as thoſe things that are held forth to us in the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? in which, not only are things declared moſt worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the moſt affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the bleſſed JEHOVAH, which is moſt worthy in itſelf, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the moſt affecting manner that can be conceived of, as it appears ſhining in all its luſtre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compaſſionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekneſs, ſubmiſſion, obedience, love and compaſſion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the moſt tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greateſt trial, and their higheſt exerciſe, and ſo their brighteſt manifeſtation, when he was in the moſt affecting circumſtances; even when he was under his laſt ſufferings, thoſe unutterable and unparallelled ſufferings, he endured, from his tender love and pity to us. There alſo, the hateful nature of our ſins is manifeſted in the moſt affecting manner poſſible; as we ſee the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to anſwer for us, ſuffered for them. And there we have the moſt affecting manifeſtations of God's hatred of ſin, and his wrath and juſtice in puniſhing it; as we ſee his juſtice in the ſtrictneſs and inflexibleneſs of it, and his wrath in its terribleneſs, in ſo dreadfully puniſhing our ſins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us So has God diſpoſed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious diſpenſations, revealed to us in the goſpel, as though every thing were purpoſely contrived in ſuch a manner, as to have the greateſt poſſible tendency to reach our hearts in the moſt tender part, and move our affections moſt ſenſibly and ſtrongly. How great cauſe have we therefore to be humbled to the duſt, that we are no more affected!

PART

# PART II.

## Shewing what are no certain Signs that religious Affections are truly gracious, or that they are not.

IF any one, on the reading of what has been juſt now ſaid, is ready to acquit himſelf, and ſay, "I am not one of thoſe "who have no religious affections; I am often greatly moved "with the conſideration of the great things of religion;" let him not content himſelf with this, that he has religious affections: for, as was obſerved before, as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all conſiſt in affection; ſo, on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiouſly affected had true grace, and was therein the ſubject of the ſaving influences of the Spirit of God: and that therefore the right way is to diſtinguiſh among religious affections, between one ſort and another. Therefore let us now endeavour to do this: and in order to it, I would do two things.

I. I would mention ſome things, which are no ſigns one way or the other, either that affections are ſuch as true religion conſiſts in, or that they are otherwiſe; that we may be guarded againſt judging of affections by falſe ſigns.

II. I would obſerve ſome things, wherein thoſe affections which are ſpiritual and gracious, differ from thoſe which are not ſo, and may be diſtinguiſhed and known.

FIRST, I would take notice of ſome things, which are no ſigns that affections are gracious, or that they are not.

I. It is no ſign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raiſed very high

Some are ready to condemn all high affections: if perſons appear to have their religious affections raiſed to an extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced againſt them, and determine that they are deluſions, without further inquiry. But if it be as has been proved, that true religion lies very much in religious affections,

affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if true religion in the hearts of men be raised to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raised to a great height.

Love is an affection; but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? and will any say, we ought not to have a very great hatred of sin, and a very deep sorrow for it? or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God, for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the salvation of fallen men? or that we should not have very great and strong desires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough; and will say, "I have "no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the "things of religion than I am; I have no reason to be asha-"med, that I have no greater exercises of love to God, and "sorrow for sin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have "received?" Who is there that will go and bless God, that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religion?

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections, when it speaks of *rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:* here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. And the scriptures often require us to exercise very high affections: thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the degree in which we ought to love God; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.* So the saints are called upon to exercise high degrees of joy: *Rejoice,* says Christ to his disciples, *and be exceeding glad,* Matth. v. 12. So it is said, Psal. lxviii. 3. *Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.* So in the same book of Psalms, the saints are often called upon to *shout for joy;* and in Luke vi. 23. to *leap for joy.* So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high degrees of gratitude for mercies, to *praise God with all their hearts, with hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and their souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous works, declaring his doings,* &c.

And we find the moſt eminent ſaints in ſcripture often profeſſing high affections. Thus the pſalmiſt *ſpeaks* of his love, as if it were *unſpeakable*; Pſal. cxix. 97. *Oh how love I thy law!* So he expreſſes a great degree of hatred of ſin; Pſal. cxxxix. 21. 22. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with perfect hatred.* He alſo expreſſes a high degree of ſorrow for ſin: he ſpeaks of his ſins *going over his head, as an heavy burden, that was too heavy for him*; and of *his roaring all the day*, and *his moiſture's being turned into the drought of ſummer*, and *his bones being* as it were *broken* with ſorrow. So he often expreſſes great degrees of ſpiritual deſires, in a multitude of the ſtrongeſt expreſſions which can be conceived of; ſuch as *his longing, his ſoul's thirſting as a dry and thirſty land where no water is, his panting, his fleſh and heart crying out, his ſoul's breaking for the longing it hath*, &c. He expreſſes the exerciſes of great and extreme grief for the ſins of others, Pſal. cxix. 136. *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, becauſe they keep not thy law.* And ver. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, becauſe of the wicked that forſake thy law.* He expreſſes high exerciſes of joy, Pſal. xxi. 1. *The king ſhall joy in thy ſtrength, and in thy ſalvation how greatly ſhall he rejoice!* Pſal. lxxi. 23. *My lips ſhall greatly rejoice, when I ſing unto thee.* Pſal. lxiii. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. *Becauſe thy loving kindneſs is better than life: my lips ſhall praiſe thee. Thus will I bleſs thee, while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs; and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. Becauſe thou haſt been my help; therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*

The apoſtle Paul expreſſes high exerciſes of affection. Thus he expreſſes the exerciſes of pity and concern for others good, even to *anguiſh of heart*; a *great*, *fervent* and *abundant love*, and *earneſt* and *longing deſires*, and *exceeding joy*; and ſpeaks of the *exultation* and *triumphs* of his ſoul, and his *earneſt expectation* and *hope*, and his *abundant tears*, and the *travails of his ſoul*, in pity, grief, earneſt deſires, godly jealouſy, and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. John the Baptiſt expreſſed *great joy*, John iii. 39. Thoſe bleſſed women that anointed the body of Jeſus, are repreſented as in a very high exerciſe of religious affection, on occaſion of Chriſt's reſurrection; Matth. xxviii. 8. *And they departed from the ſepulchre, with fear and great joy.*

It

It is often foretold of the church of God, in her future happy seasons here on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psal. lxxxix. 15. 16. *They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* Zech. ix. 9. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh,* &c. The same is represented in innumerable other places. And because high degrees of joy are the proper and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel, *good tidings of great joy, that should be to all people.*

The saints and angels in heaven, that have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate of God's perfections and works. They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire, in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude: their praises are represented, *as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder.* Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of saints on earth, is, they see the things they are affected by, more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And therefore, if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better; because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that religious affections being in a very high degree, is no evidence that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusiasts, merely because their affections are very high.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy scripture, our sure and infallible rule to judge of things of this nature, that there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The apostle Paul speaks of affections in the Galatians, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifestly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing, Gal. iv. 15. *Where is the blessedness you spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.* And in the 11th verse he tells them, *he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain.* So the

children of Iſrael were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had ſeen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red ſea, where they *ſang God's praiſe:* though they ſoon forgat his works. So they were greatly affected again, at mount Sinai, when they ſaw the marvellous manifeſtations God made of himſelf there; and ſeemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardneſs made anſwer, when God propoſed his holy covenant to them, ſaying, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken will we do, and be obedient.* But how ſoon was there an end to all this mighty forwardneſs and engagedneſs of affection? how quickly were they turned aſide after other gods, rejoicing and ſhouting around their golden calf? So great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raiſing Lazarus from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jeſus preſently after entered into Jeruſalem, exceedingly magnifying Chriſt, as though the ground were not good enough for the aſs he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down branches of palm-trees, and ſtrawed them in the way; yea, pulled off their garments, and ſpread them in the way; and cried with loud voices, *Hoſanna to the ſon of David, bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hoſanna in the higheſt:* ſo as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangeliſt John, that the reaſon why the people made this ado, was becauſe they were affected with the miracle of raiſing Lazarus, John xii. 18. Here was a vaſt multitude crying *Hoſanna* on this occaſion, ſo that it gave occaſion to the Phariſees to ſay, *Behold, the world is gone after him,* John xii. 19.; but Chriſt had at that time but few true diſciples. And how quickly was this ado at an end? all of this nature is quelled and dead, when this Jeſus ſtands bound, with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, ſpit upon, ſcourged, condemned, and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud outcry concerning him, among the multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different kind: it is not then, *Hoſanna, hoſanna,* but, *Crucify, crucify.*

And it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections, which are raiſed to a very high degree, and yet there be nothing of true religion *.

II. It is no ſign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.

* Mr Stoddard obſerves, "That common affections are ſometimes ſtronger "than ſaving." *Guide to Chriſt,* p. 21.

All

All affections whatsoever, have in some respect or degree, an effect on the body. As was observed before, such is our nature, and such are the laws of union of soul and body, that the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise, without some effect upon the body. So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its fluids, especially the animal spirits, attend the motions and exercises of the mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them. Yea it is questionable, whether an imbodied soul ever so much as thinks one thought, or has any exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration of motion, in some degree, of the fluids, in some part of the body. But universal experience shews, that the exercise of the affections have in a special manner a tendency to some sensible effect upon the body. And if this be so, that all affections have some effect on the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections be, and the more vigorous their exercise, (other circumstances being equal), the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very *great* and strong exercises of the affections should have *great* effects on the body. And therefore, seeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both these kinds of affections. And consequently these effects are no signs, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidences that affections are spiritual; for we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about secular things, that are purely natural, may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determine, that high affections about religious things, which arise in like manner from nature, cannot have the like effect.

Nor on the other hand, do I know of any rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy affections, when raised as high as any natural affections, and have equally strong and vigorous exercises, cannot have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from reason: I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint, as well as being affected with a view of Solomon's glory. And no such rule has as yet been produced from the scripture: none has ever been found in all the late controversies which have been about things of this nature. There is a great power in spiritual affections; we read of the power

power which worketh in Christians *, and of the Spirit of God being in them, as the Spirit of power †, and of the effectual working of his power in them ‡, yea, of the working of God's mighty power in them ‖. But man's nature is weak: flesh and blood are represented in scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with respect to its unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly operations and exercises, Matth. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 43. and 50. The text we are upon speaks of *joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* And who that considers what man's nature is, and what the nature of the affections are, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious joys, may be too great and mighty for weak dust and ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the scripture, that true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body; because the scripture teaches us often, that if these ideas or views should be given to such a degree, as they are given in heaven, the weak frame of the body could not subsist under it, and that no man can, in that manner, see God and live. The knowledge which the saints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arise from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the saints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances: what God gives them here, is a foretaste of heavenly happiness, and an earnest of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or say he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is such, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us, so to set bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the earnest of this reward in this world, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The psalmist speaking of vehement religious affections he had, speaks of an effect in his flesh or body, besides what was in his soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my* heart *and my* flesh *crieth out for the living God.* Here is a plain distinction between the heart and the flesh, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1. *My* soul *thirsteth for thee, my* flesh *longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty*

* Eph. iii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 7. 20. ‖ Eph. i. 19.

*land,*

*land, where no water is.* Here alſo is an evident deſigned diſtinction between the ſoul and the fleſh.

The prophet Habakkuk ſpeaks of his body's being overborn, by a ſenſe of the majeſty of God, Hab. iii. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenneſs entered into my bones, and I trembled in myſelf.* So the pſalmiſt ſpeaks expreſsly of his fleſh trembling, Pſal. cxix. 120. *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee.*

That ſuch ideas of God's glory, as are ſometimes given in this world, have a tendency to overbear the body, is evident, becauſe the ſcripture gives us an account, that this has ſometimes actually been the effect of thoſe external manifeſtations God has made of himſelf, to ſome of the ſaints, which were made to that end, *viz.* to give them an idea of God's majeſty and glory. Such inſtances we have in the prophet Daniel, and the apoſtle John. Daniel giving an account of an external repreſentation of the glory of Chriſt, ſays, Dan. x. 8. *And there remained no ſtrength in me; for my comelineſs was turned into corruption, and I retained no ſtrength.* And the apoſtle John giving an account of a like manifeſtation made to him, ſays, Rev. i. 17. *And when I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead.* It is in vain to ſay here, theſe were only external manifeſtations or ſymbols of the glory of Chriſt, which theſe ſaints beheld: for though it be true, that they were outward repreſentations of Chriſt's glory, which they beheld with their bodily eyes; yet the end and uſe of theſe external ſymbols or repreſentations, was to give to theſe prophets an idea of the thing repreſented, and that was the true divine glory and majeſty of Chriſt, which is his ſpiritual glory; they were made uſe of only as ſignifications of this ſpiritual glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the end for which God intended theſe outward ſigns, they received by them a great and lively apprehenſion of the real glory and majeſty of God's nature, which they were ſigns of; and thus were greatly affected, their ſouls ſwallowed up, and their bodies overborn. And I think, they are very bold and daring, who will ſay God cannot, or ſhall not give the like clear and affecting ideas and apprehenſions of the ſame real glory and majeſty of his nature, to none of his ſaints, without the intervention of any ſuch external ſhadows of it

Before I leave this head, I would farther obſerve, that it is plain the ſcripture often makes uſe of bodily effects, to expreſs the ſtrength of holy and ſpiritual affections; ſuch as *trembling*,

*bling* *, *groaning* †, *being sick* ‖, *crying out* ‡, *panting* §, and *fainting* **. Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative expressions, to represent the degree of affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections, which the Spirit of God makes use of them to represent: which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual affections, let them be in never so high a degree, have no tendency to any such things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper effects, and sad tokens of false affections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful figures, to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections.

III. It is no sign that affections are truly gracious affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant, in talking of the things of religion.

There are many persons, who if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of talk, is with them, a sufficient ground to condemn them, as Pharisees, and ostentatious hypocrites. On the other hand, there are many, who if they see this effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, and are under the saving influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature: they say, *such an one's mouth is now opened: he used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: he is free now to open his heart, and tell his experiences, and declare the praises of God; it comes from him, as free as water from a fountain*; and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting persuasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their talk.

But this is the fruit of but little judgement, a scanty and short experience; as events do abundantly shew: and is a mistake persons often run into, through their trusting to their own wisdom and discerning, and making their own notions their rule, instead of the holy scripture. Though the scripture be

* Psal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Is. lxvi. 2. 5. Hab. iii. 16. † Rom. viii. 26. ‖ Cant. ii. 5. and v. 8. ‡ Psal. lxxxiv. 2. § Psal. xxxviii. 10. and xlii. 1. and cxix. 131. ** Psal. lxxxiv. 2. and cxix. 81.

full

full of rules, both how we ſhould judge of our own ſtate, and alſo how we ſhould be conducted in our opinion of others; yet we have no where any rule, by which to judge ourſelves or others to be in a good eſtate, from any ſuch effect: for this is but the religion of the mouth and of the tongue, and what is in the ſcripture repreſented by the leaves of a tree, which though the tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an evidence of the goodneſs of the tree.

That perſons are diſpoſed to be abundant in talking of things of religion, may be from a good cauſe, and it may be from a bad one. It may be becauſe their hearts are very full of holy affections; for *out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh:* and it may be becauſe perſons hearts are very full of religious affection which is not holy; for ſtill out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh. It is very much the nature of the affections, of whatever kind they be, and whatever objects they are exerciſed about, if they are ſtrong, to diſpoſe perſons to be very much in ſpeaking of that which they are affected with; and not only to ſpeak much, but to ſpeak very earneſtly and fervently. And therefore perſons talking abundantly and very fervently about the things of religion, can be an evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the things of religion; but this may be, (as has been already ſhown), and there be no grace. That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affection laſts, they will be earneſtly engaged about, and will be likely to ſhew that earneſtneſs in their talk and behaviour; as the greater part of the Jews, in all Judah and Galilee, did for a while, about John the Baptiſt's preaching and baptiſm, when they were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light: a mighty ado was made, all over the land, and among all ſorts of perſons, about this great prophet and his miniſtry. And ſo the multitude in like manner, often manifeſted a great earneſtneſs, a mighty engagedneſs of ſpirit, in every thing that was external, about Chriſt and his preaching and miracles, *being aſtoniſhed at his doctrine, anon with joy receiving the word*, following him, ſometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink, and ſleep to hear him; once following him into the wilderneſs, faſting three days going, to hear him; ſometimes crying him up to the clouds, ſaying, *Never man ſpake like this man!* being fervent and earneſt in what they ſaid. But what did theſe things come to, in the greater part of them?

A perſon may be over-full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, every where, and in all companies;

and when it is so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. As a tree that is over-full of leaves, seldom bears much fruit: and as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it over-much wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth: which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great shew of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life, Prov. xxv. 14. *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.* And the apostle Jude, speaking of some in the primitive times, that *crept in unawares* among the saints, and having a great shew of religion, were for a while not suspected, *These are clouds* (says he) *without water, carried about of winds*, Jude ver. 4. and 12. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17. *These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest.*

False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true: because it is the nature of false religion, to affect shew and observation; as it was with the Pharisees †.

IV. It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, and by their own strength.

There are many in these days, that condemn all affections which are excited in a way that the subjects of them can give no account of, as not seeming to be the fruit of any of their own endeavours, or the natural consequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under

† That famous experimental divine Mr Shepard, says, "A Pharisee's "trumpet shall be heard to the town's "end; when simplicity walks through "the, town unseen. Hence a man "will sometimes covertly commend "himself, (and *myself* ever comes in), "and tells you a long story of con- "version: and an hundred to one if "some lie or other slip not out with "it. Why, the secret meaning is, *I "pray admire me.* Hence complain "of wants and weaknesses; *pray think "what a broken-hearted Christian I am.*" *Parab. of the ten virgins*, Part I. page 179. 180.

And holy Mr Flavel says thus, "O "reader, if thy heart were right with "God, and thou didst not cheat thy- "self with a vain profession, thou "wouldst have frequent business with "God, which thou wouldst be loth "thy dearest friend, or the wife of "thy bosom should be privy to. "*Non est religio, ubi omnia pa- "tent.* Religion doth not lie o- "pen to all, to the eyes of men. "Observed duties maintain our credit; "but secret duties maintain our life. "It was the saying of an heathen, "about his secret correspondency with "his friend, *What need the world be "acquainted with it? Thou and I are "theatre enough to each other.* There "are inclosed pleasures in religion, "which none but renewed spiritual "souls do feelingly understand." *Flavel's Touchstone of sincerity*, Chap. II. sect. 2.

such

ſuch means; but to be from the influence of ſome extrinſic and ſupernatural power upon their minds. How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience or ſenſible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late? They ſay, the manner of the Spirit of God, is to co-operate in a ſilent, ſecret and undiſcernible way with the uſe of means, and our own endeavours; ſo that there is no diſtinguiſhing by ſenſe, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the ſaving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreaſonable preſumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will ſavingly operate upon their minds, without the Spirit's making uſe of means, as ſubſervient to the effect, is enthuſiaſtical. It is alſo undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumſtances of his operations, and that ſometimes he operates in a way more ſecret and gradual, and from ſmaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from and beyond our power, or the power of all means and inſtruments, and above the power of nature, which is requiſite in order to the production of ſaving grace in the heart, according to the general profeſſion of the country; then certainly, it is in no wiſe unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that this effect ſhould very frequently be produced after ſuch a manner, as to make it very manifeſt, apparent, and ſenſible that it is ſo. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinſic agent, or divine efficient out of ourſelves, why is it unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, it ſhould ſeem to be ſo, to them who are the ſubjects of it? Is it a ſtrange thing, that it ſhould ſeem to be as it is? When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our ſtrength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or inſtruments, but is properly the workmanſhip and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a ſtrange and unaccountable thing, that it ſhould ſeem to them who are ſubjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not right contrary to truth; ſo that if perſons tell of effects that they are conſcious to in their own minds, that ſeem to them not to be from the natural power or operation of their minds, but from the ſupernatural power of ſome other agent, it ſhould at once be looked upon as a ſure evidence of their being under a deluſion, becauſe things ſeem to them to be as they are? For this

is the objection which is made: it is looked upon as a clear evidence, that the apprehensions and affections that many persons have, are not really from such a cause, because they seem to them to be from that cause: they declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes treated at this day, by their neighbours.

If it be indeed so, as the scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the soul, is so the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects, which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, such as a *generation*, or *a being begotten*, and *resurrection*, or *a being raised from the dead*, and *creation*, or *a being brought out of nothing into being*, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power is manifested *; then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a work of his power, should so carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the scripture, this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so, as to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and mens dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence †, that God alone might be exalted ‡, and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man ‖, and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness §, and none might say, mine own hand hath saved me **. So it was in most of those temporal salvations which God wrought for Israel of old, which were types of the salvation of God's people from their spiritual enemies. So it was in the redemption of Israel from their Egyptian bondage; he redeemed them with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered Israel first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So it was in the great redemption by Gideon; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they

* Eph. i. 17.---20. † 1 Cor. i. 27. 28. 29. ‡ Isa. ii. 11.---17. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 7. § 2 Cor. xii. 9. ** Judg. vii. 2.

without

without any other arms, than trumpets, and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So it was in the deliverance of Israel from Goliath, by a stripling, with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the Gentiles, and converting the Heathen world, after Christ's ascension, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavours of philosophers had proved in vain, for many ages, to reform the world, and it was by every thing become abundantly evident, that the world was utterly helpless, by any thing else but the mighty power of God. And so it was in most of the conversions of particular persons, we have an account of in the history of the New Testament: they were not wrought on in that silent, secret, gradual, and insensible manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain signs of delusion and enthusiasm.

The apostle in Eph. i. 18. 19. speaks of God's enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end that they *might know* the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words are, *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power*, &c. Now when the apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end that they might know what his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else, than *that they might know by experience.* But if the saints know this power by experience, then they feel it, and discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds, which is not agreeable to a notion of God's operating so secretly, and undiscernibly, that it cannot be known that they are the subjects of the influence of any extrinsic power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from scripture assertions; which is a different thing from knowing it by experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves, that are the subjects of them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the subjects

ſubjects of them, or that they ariſe in their minds in a manner they cannot account for.

There are ſome who make this an argument in their own favour, when ſpeaking of what they have experienced, they ſay, "I am ſure I did not make it myſelf: it was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavour of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the world for it, I cannot make it again when I pleaſe." And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, muſt be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a ſaving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have been the ſubjects of, may indeed not be from themſelves directly, but may be from the operation of an inviſible agent, ſome ſpirit beſides their own: but it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other ſpirits who have influence on the minds of men, beſides the Holy Ghoſt. We are directed not to believe every ſpirit, but to try the ſpirits, whether they be of God. There are many falſe ſpirits, exceeding buſy with men, who often transform themſelves into angels of light, and do in many wonderful ways, with great ſubtilty and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of Satan's operations, which are very diſtinguiſhable from the voluntary exerciſes of mens own minds. They are ſo, in thoſe dreadful and horrid ſuggeſtions, and blaſphemous injections with which he follows many perſons; and in vain and fruitleſs frights and terrors, which he is the author of. And the power of Satan may be as immediate, and as evident in falſe comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid ſuggeſtions; and oftentimes is ſo in fact. It is not in mens power to put themſelves into ſuch raptures, as the Anabaptiſts in Germany, and many other raving Enthuſiaſts like them, have been the ſubjects of.

And beſides, it is to be conſidered, that perſons may have thoſe impreſſions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil ſpirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any ſaving, but a common influence of the Spirit of God: and the ſubjects of ſuch impreſſions, may be of the number of thoſe we read of, Heb. vi. 4. 5. *that are once enlightened, and taſte of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and taſte the good word of God, and the power of the world to come;* and yet may be wholly unacquainted with thoſe *better things that accompany ſalvation*, ſpoken of ver. 9.

And where neither a good nor evil ſpirit have any immediate hand, perſons, eſpecially ſuch as are of a weak and vapoury habit

bit of body, and the brain weak, and eaſily ſuſceptive of impreſſions, may have ſtrange apprehenſions and imaginations, and ſtrong affections attending them, unaccountably ariſing, which are not voluntarily produced by themſelves. We ſee that ſuch perſons are liable to ſuch impreſſions, about temporal things; and there is equal reaſon, why they ſhould about ſpiritual things. As a perſon who is aſleep, has dreams, that he is not the voluntary author of; ſo may ſuch perſons, in like manner, be the ſubjects of involuntary impreſſions, when they are awake.

V. It is no ſign that religious affections are truly holy and ſpiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of ſcripture, remarkably brought to the mind.

It is no ſign that affections are not gracious, that they are occaſioned by ſcriptures ſo coming to mind; provided it be the ſcripture itſelf, or the truth which the ſcripture ſo brought contains and teaches, that is the foundation of the affection, and not merely or mainly, the ſudden and unuſual manner of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any ſign that affections are gracious, that they ariſe on occaſion of ſcriptures brought ſuddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether thoſe affections be fear or hope, joy or ſorrow, or any other. Some ſeem to look upon this, as a good evidence that their affections are ſaving, eſpecially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleaſing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience *came with the word*, and will ſay, "There were ſuch and ſuch "ſweet promiſes brought to my mind: they came ſuddenly, "as if they were ſpoke to me: I had no hand in bringing "ſuch a text to my own mind; I was not thinking of any "thing leading to it; it came all at once, ſo that I was ſur-"priſed. I had not thought of it a long time before; I did "not know at firſt that it was ſcripture; I did not remember "that ever I had read it." And it may be, they will add, "One ſcripture came flowing in after another, and ſo texts "all over the Bible, the moſt ſweet and pleaſant, and the moſt "apt and ſuitable, which could be deviſed; and filled me "full as I could hold: I could not but ſtand and admire: "the tears flowed; I was full of joy, and could not doubt any "longer." And thus they think they have undoubted evidence, that their affections muſt be from God, and of the right kind, and their ſtate good: but without any manner of grounds.

grounds. How come they by any such rule, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and comfortable texts of scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are saving? where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate sort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; that the scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect: and therefore, those experiences which come from the scripture must be right. But then it would be considered, affections may arise on *occasion* of the scripture, and not properly come *from* the scripture, as the genuine fruit of the scripture, and by a right use of it; but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are *agreeable* to the word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise *on occasion* of the word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of scripture to the mind, and misapply them, to deceive persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of Satan. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons minds, that we have any reason to suppose, nothing shows of omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If Satan has power to bring any words or sounds at all to persons minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher sort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same power in Satan, which is sufficient to renew one of those kinds of sounds in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: the different signification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the sounds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts of scripture are such sacred things, that the devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the wilderness, and into an high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the scripture, and abuse that for his own purposes:

purpoſes: as he ſhewed at the ſame time that he was ſo bold with Chriſt, he then brought one ſcripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if Satan did preſume, and was permitted, to put Chriſt himſelf in mind of texts of ſcripture to tempt *him*, what reaſon have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in mind of texts of ſcripture, to tempt and deceive *them?* And if Satan may thus abuſe one text of ſcripture, ſo he may another. Its being a very excellent place of ſcripture, a comfortable and precious promiſe, alters not the caſe, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, ſo he may a thouſand; and may chooſe out ſuch ſcriptures as tend moſt to ſerve his purpoſe; and may heap up ſcripture-promiſes, tending, according to the perverſe application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the riſing doubts, and to confirm the falſe joy and confidence of a poor deluded ſinner.

We know the devil's inſtruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the ſcripture, to their own and others damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 16. We ſee they have the free uſe of ſcripture, in every part of it; there is no text ſo precious and ſacred, but they are permitted to abuſe it, to the eternal ruin of multitudes of ſouls; and there are no weapons they make uſe of with which they do more execution. And there is no manner of reaſon to determine, that the devil is not permitted thus to uſe the ſcripture, as well as his inſtruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his inſtruments and ſervants, and through his inſtigation and influence: and doubtleſs he does the ſame he inſtigates others to do; the devil's ſervants do but follow their maſter, and do the ſame work that he does himſelf.

And as the devil can abuſe the ſcripture, to deceive and deſtroy men, ſo may mens own folly and corruptions as well. The ſin which is in men, acts like its father. Mens own hearts are deceitful like the devil, and uſe the ſame means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that perſons may have high affections of hope and joy, ariſing on occaſion of texts of ſcripture, yea precious promiſes of ſcripture coming ſuddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were ſpoke to them, yea a great multitude of ſuch texts, following one another in a wonderful manner, and yet all this be no argument that theſe affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's deluſions.

And I would further obſerve, that perſons may have raiſed

and joyful affections, which may come with the word of God, and not only ſo, but from the word, and thoſe affections not be from Satan, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from ſome influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of true and ſaving religion in them. Thus the ſtony-ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea, which is repreſented as ariſing from the word, as growth from a ſeed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great and exact reſemblance with thoſe repreſented by the growth on the good ground, the difference not appearing, until it was diſcovered by the conſequences in a time of trial: and yet there was no ſaving religion in theſe affections ‖.

VI. It is no evidence that religious affections are ſaving, or that they are otherwiſe, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no profeſſing Chriſtians who pretend, that this is an argument againſt the truth and ſaving nature of religious affections. But on the other hand, there are ſome who ſuppoſe, it is a good evidence that affections are from the ſanctifying and ſaving influences of the Holy Ghoſt. Their argument is, that *Satan cannot love*; this affection being directly contrary to the devil, whoſe very nature is enmity and malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly and divine, than a ſpirit of true Chriſtian love to God and men: it is more excellent than *knowledge*, or *prophecy*, or *miracles*, or *ſpeaking with the tongue of men and angels*. It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit, and the life, eſſence and ſum of all true religion; and that by which we are moſt conformed to heaven, and moſt contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be obſerved, that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of ſilver and gold, than of iron and copper: there are many falſe diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common ſtones? Though the more excellent things are, the more difficult it is to make any thing that ſhall be like

‖ Mr Stoddard, in his *Guide to Chriſt*, ſpeaks of it as a *common thing*, for perſons while in a natural condition, and before they have ever truly *accepted of Chriſt*, to have ſcripture-*promiſes* come to them, with *a great deal of refreſhing*; which they *take as tokens of God's love, and hope that God has accepted them*; and ſo are confident of their good eſtate, Page 8. 9. Impreſſion *anno* 1735.

them,

them, in their essential nature and internal virtue; yet the more manifold will the counterfeits be, and the more will art and subtilty be exercised and displayed, in an exact imitation of the outward appearance. Thus there is the greatest danger of being cheated in buying of medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them, with any thing of the like value and virtue, and their counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtilty of Satan, and mens deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute. So there are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility; these being virtues wherein the beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with respect to love; it is plain by the scripture, that persons may have a kind of religious love, and yet have no saving grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such love, whose love will not continue, and so shall fail of salvation, Matth. xxiv. 12. 13. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* Which latter words plainly shew, that those spoken of before, whose love shall not *endure to the end*, but *wax cold*, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent affections of this nature, and yet have no grace. For this was evidently the case with many graceless Jews, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him day and night, without meat, drink, or sleep; such as said, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, and cried, *Hosanna to the son of David* †.

The apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his days, who had a counterfeit love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ* in sincerity. The last word, in the original, signifies *in incorruption*; which shews, that the apostle was sensible that there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, whose love was not pure and spiritual.

† Agreeable to this Mr Stoddard observes, in his *Guide to Christ*, that some sinners have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God, and of their aiming at the glory of God, having that which has a great resemblance of saving grace; and that sometimes their common affections are stronger than saving. And supposes, that sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of false affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned. Page 21. and 65.

So also Christian love to the people of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the scripture, that there may be strong affections of this kind, without saving grace; as there were in the Galatians towards the apostle Paul, when they were ready to pluck out their eyes and give them to him; although the apostle expresses his fear that their affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them labour in vain, Gal. iv. 11. 15.

VII. Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or no.

Though false religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that entireness and symmetry of parts, which is to be seen in true religion; yet there may be a great variety of false affections together, that may resemble gracious affections.

It is evident that there are counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affections; as of *love to God*, and *love to the brethren*, as has been just now observed; so of *godly sorrow for sin*, as in Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab, and the children of Israel in the wilderness, Exod. ix. 27. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. 17. and xxvi. 21. 1 Kings xxi. 27. Numb. xiv. 39. 40.; and of the *fear of God*, as in the Samaritans, *who feared the Lord, and served their own gods* at the same time, 2 Kings xvii. 32. 33.; and those enemies of God we read of, Psal. lxvi. 3. who *through the greatness of God's power, submit themselves to him*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lie unto him*, i. e. yield a counterfeit reverence and submission: so of a *gracious gratitude*, as in the children of Israel, who sang God's praise at the Red sea, Psal. cvi. 12. and Naaman the Syrian, after his miraculous cure of his leprosy, 2 Kings v. 15. *&c.*

So of *spiritual joy*, as in the stony-ground hearers, Matth. xiii. 20. and particularly many of John the Baptist's hearers, John v. 35. So of *zeal*, as in Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16. and in Paul before his conversion, Gal. i. 14. Phil. iii. 6. and the unbelieving Jews, Acts xxii. 3. Rom. x. 2. So graceless persons may have earnest religious *desires*, which may be like Balaam's desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary view that he had of the happy state of God's people, as distinguished from all the rest of the world, Numb. xxiii. 9. 10. They may also have a strong *hope* of eternal life, as the Pharisees had.

And as men, while in a state of nature, are capable of a resemblance

ſemblance of all kinds of religious affections, ſo nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in fact, does abundantly evince that it is very often ſo indeed. It ſeems commonly to be ſo, that when falſe affections are raiſed high, there are many falſe affections attend each other. The multitude that attended Chriſt into Jeruſalem, after that great miracle of raiſing Lazarus, ſeem to be moved with many religious affections at once, and all in a high degree. They ſeem to be filled with *admiration*, and there was a ſhew of an high affection of *love*, and alſo of a great degree of *reverence*, in their laying their garments on the ground for Chriſt to tread upon; and alſo of great *gratitude* to him, for the great and good works he had wrought, praiſing him with loud voices for his ſalvation; and earneſt *deſires* of the coming of God's kingdom, which they ſuppoſed Jeſus was now about to ſet up, and ſhewed great *hopes* and raiſed expectations of it, *expecting it would immediately appear*; and hence were filled with *joy*, by which they were ſo animated in their acclamations, as to make the whole city ring with the noiſe of them; and appeared great in their *zeal* and forwardneſs to attend Jeſus, and aſſiſt him without further delay, now in the time of the great feaſt of the *paſſover*, to ſet up his kingdom. And it is eaſy, from nature, and the nature of the affections, to give an account why, when one affection is raiſed very high, that it ſhould excite others; eſpecially if the affection which is raiſed high, be that of counterfeit *love*, as it was in the multitude who cried *Hoſanna*. This will naturally draw many other affections after it. For, as was obſerved before, love is the chief of the affections, and as it were the fountain of them. Let us ſuppoſe a perſon who has been for ſome time in great exerciſe and terror through fear of hell, and his heart weakened with diſtreſs and dreadful apprehenſions, and upon the brink of deſpair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through ſome deluſion of Satan, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the object of his dear love, and promiſes him eternal life; as ſuppoſe through ſome viſion, or ſtrong idea or imagination, ſuddenly excited in him, of a perſon with a beautiful countenance, ſmiling on him, and with arms open, and with blood dropping down, which the perſon conceives to be Chriſt, without any other enlightening of the underſtanding, to give a view of the ſpiritual divine excellency of Chriſt and his fulneſs, and of the way of ſalvation revealed in the goſpel; or perhaps by ſome voice or words coming as if they were ſpoke to him, ſuch as theſe, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgi-*

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*ven thee;* or, *Fear not, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding acceptance of Christ, or closing of the heart with him: I say, if we should suppose such a case, what various passions would naturally croud at once, or one after another, into such a person's mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from mere principles of nature, that a person's heart, on such an occasion, should be raised up to the skies with transports of joy, and be filled with fervent affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the jaws of such dreadful destruction, that his soul was so amazed with the fears of, and has received him with such endearment, as a peculiar favourite; and that now he should be filled with admiration and gratitude, and his mouth should be opened, and be full of talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a chearful countenance, and talk with a loud voice: and however, before his deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his feet as tame as a lamb; and that he should now confess his unworthiness, and cry out, *Why me? why me?* (Like Saul, who when Samuel told him that God had appointed him to be king, makes answer, *Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?* Much in the language of David, the true saint, 2 Sam. vii. 18. *Who am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*) Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent zeal against all such as would make nothing of such things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim war with all who be not of his party, and should now glory in his sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any difficulty of these things; and while the warmth of his affections last, should be mighty forward to take pains, and deny himself, to promote the interest of the party who he imagines favour such things, and seem earnestly desirous to increase

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the number of them, as the Phariſees compaſſed ſea and land to make one *proſelyte* †. And ſo I might go on, and mention many other things, which will naturally ariſe in ſuch circumſtances. He muſt have but ſlightly conſidered human nature, who thinks ſuch things as theſe cannot ariſe in this manner, without any ſupernatural interpoſition of divine power.

As from true divine love flow all Chriſtian affections, ſo from a counterfeit love in like manner naturally flow other falſe affections. In both caſes, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the ſtreams. The various faculties, principles and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: if there be ſweet water in the fountain, ſweet water will from thence flow out into thoſe various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poiſonous, then poiſonous ſtreams will alſo flow out into all thoſe channels. So that the channels and ſtreams will be alike, correſponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or, man's nature may be compared to a tree, with many branches, coming from one root: if the ſap in the root be good, there will alſo be good ſap diſtributed throughout the branches, and the fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholeſome; but if the ſap in the root and ſtock be poiſonous, ſo it will be in many branches, (as in the other caſe), and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in both caſes may be alike; there may be an exact reſemblance in ſhape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus (in ſome meaſure at leaſt) oftentimes, between ſaints and hypocrites. There is ſometimes a very great ſimilitude between true and falſe experiences, in their appearance, and in what is expreſſed and related by the ſubjects of them: and the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker; they ſeemed to be much alike, inſomuch that when Joſeph interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he ſhould be delivered from his impriſonment, and reſtored to the king's favour, and his honourable office in the palace, the chief baker had raiſed hopes and expectations, and told his dream alſo; but he was wofully diſappointed; and though his dream was ſo much like the happy and well-bodding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its iſſue.

† "Aſſociating with godly men does "not prove that a man has grace: "Ahithophel was David's companion. "Sorrows for the afflictions of the "church, and deſires for the converſion of ſouls, do not prove it. Theſe "things may be found in carnal men, "and ſo can be no evidences of "grace." Stoddard's *Nature of ſaving converſion*, p. 82.

VIII. Nothing

VIII. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a *certain order.*

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences that come in such a method, as has been much insisted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears and awful apprehensions followed with such legal humblings, in a sense of total sinfulness and helplessness, and then, such and such light and comfort: they look upon all such schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of mens devising: and particularly if high affections of joy follow great distress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As men that are saved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blessedness; and as God in the work of the salvation of mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved, should be in these two states sensibly, first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a state of condemnation, and so in a state of woful calamity and dreadful misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a state of deliverance and happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to *lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them,* and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness, and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the scripture. Then is God wont to *repent himself for his professing people, when their strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left,* and when they are brought to see that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain, Deut. xxxii. 36. 37. Before God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were prepared for it, by being made

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to *see that they were in an evil case*, and *to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage*, Exod. ii. 23. and v. 19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red sea, they were brought into great distress, *the wilderness had shut them in*, they could not turn to the right hand nor the left, and the Red sea was before them, and the great Egyptian host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared, and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of Canaan, God *led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he might humble them, and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end*, Deut. viii. 2. 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first *spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any*, and so was left helpless, having no more money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any money or price, and was healed by him, Luke viii. 43. 44. Before Christ would answer the request of the woman of Canaan, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a dog; and then he shewed her mercy, and received her as a dear child, Matth. xv. 22. *&c.* The apostle Paul, before a remarkable deliverance, was *pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life; but had the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead*, 2 Cor. i. 8. 9. 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to sink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, *Lord, save us, we perish*; and then the winds and seas were rebuked, and there was a great calm, Matth. viii. 24. 25. 26. The leper, before he is cleansed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great misery and utter uncleanness, by rending his cloaths, and crying, *Unclean, unclean*, Lev. xiii. 45. And backsliding Israel, before God heals them, are brought to *acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord*, and to see that *they lie down in their shame, and that confusion covers them*, and *that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains*, and that God only can save them, Jer. iii. 23. 24. 25. Joseph, who was sold by his brethren, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brethren into great perplexity and distress, and brings

them to reflect on their sin, and to say, we are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their brother and their saviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was terrible, and then by those things that were comfortable. So it was with Abraham; first, a *horror of great darkness fell upon him*, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, Gen. xv. 12. 13. So it was with Moses at mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful majesty, so that Moses said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*, and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, *The Lord God gracious and merciful*, &c. So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice, 1 Kings xix. So it was with Daniel; he first saw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, *O Daniel, a man greatly beloved*, Dan. x. So it was with the apostle John, Rev. i. And there is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestation which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in scripture which do more directly shew, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men, and in the manifestations God makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt, and the king pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his father, Luke xv. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing: and the scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, to this, and speaks of healing this wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful, Jer. viii. 11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, Psal. lxxii. 6. representing his refreshing, comforting influences

influences on the wounded ſpirit. Our firſt parents, after they had ſinned, were firſt terrified with God's majeſty and juſtice, and had their ſin, with its aggravations, ſet before them by their Judge, before they were relieved by the promiſe of the ſeed of the woman. Chriſtians are ſpoken of as thoſe *that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before them*, Heb. vi. 18. which repreſentation implies great fear, and ſenſe of danger preceding. To the like purpoſe, Chriſt is called *a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Iſ. xxxii. at the beginning. And it ſeems to be the natural import of the word *goſpel*, glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and ſalvation, after great fear and diſtreſs. There is all reaſon to ſuppoſe, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his church, which he firſt made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that ſchoolmaſter, to prepare her for Chriſt; and then comforted her with the joyful ſound of the goſpel from mount Sion. So likewiſe John the Baptiſt came to prepare the way for Chriſt, and prepare mens hearts for his reception, by ſhewing them their ſins, and by bringing the ſelf-righteous Jews off from their own righteouſneſs, telling them that they were a *generation of vipers*, and ſhewing them their danger of *the wrath to come*, telling them that *the ax was laid at the root of the trees*, &c.

And if it be indeed God's manner, (as I think the foregoing conſiderations ſhew that it undoubtedly is), before he gives men the comfort of a deliverance from their ſin and miſery, to give them a conſiderable ſenſe of the greatneſs and dreadfulneſs of thoſe evils, and their extreme wretchedneſs by reaſon of them; ſurely it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that perſons, at leaſt oftentimes, while under theſe views, ſhould have great diſtreſſes and terrible apprehenſions of mind: eſpecially if it be conſidered what theſe evils are, that they have a view of; which are no other than great and manifold ſins, againſt the infinite majeſty of the great JEHOVAH, and the ſuffering of the fierceneſs of his wrath to all eternity. And the more ſo ſtill, when we have many plain inſtances in ſcripture, of perſons that have actually been brought into extreme diſtreſs, by ſuch convictions, before they have received ſaving conſolations: as the multitude at Jeruſalem, who were *pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* and the apoſtle Paul, who *trembled and was aſtoniſhed*, before he was comforted; and the jailor, when *he called for a light,*

*and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?*

From theſe things it appears to be very unreaſonable in profeſſing Chriſtians, to make this an objection againſt the truth and ſpiritual nature of the comfortable and joyful affections which any have, that they follow ſuch awful apprehenſions and diſtreſſes, as have been mentioned.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that comforts and joys are right, becauſe they ſucceed great terrors, and amazing fears of hell *. This ſeems to be what ſome perſons lay great weight upon; eſteeming great terrors an evidence of a great work of the law wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for ſolid comfort: not conſidering that terror, and a conviction of conſcience, are different things. For though convictions of conſcience do often cauſe terror; yet they do not conſiſt in it; and terrors do often ariſe from other cauſes. Convictions of conſcience, through the influences of God's Spirit, conſiſt in conviction of ſinfulneſs of heart and practice, and of the dreadfulneſs of ſin, as committed againſt a God of terrible majeſty, infinite holineſs and hatred of ſin, and ſtrict juſtice in puniſhing of it. But there are ſome perſons that have frightful apprehenſions of hell, a dreadful pit ready to ſwallow them up, and flames juſt ready to lay hold of them, and devils around them, ready to ſeize them; who at the ſame time ſeem to have very little proper enlightenings of conſcience, really convincing them of their ſinfulneſs of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men as well as the Spirit of God, it is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it, in a manner tending to no good. He may exceedingly affright perſons, by impreſſing on them many external images and ideas, of a countenance frowning, a ſword drawn, black clouds of vengeance, words of an awful doom pronounced †, hell ga-

* Mr Shepard ſpeaks of "mens being caſt down as low as hell by ſorrow and lying under chains, quaking in apprehenſion of terror to come, and then raiſed up to heaven in joy, not able to live; and yet not rent from luſt: and ſuch are objects of pity now, and are like to be the objects of terror at the great day." *Parable of the ten Virgins*, P. i. p. 125.

† "The way of the Spirit's working, when it does convince men, is by enlightening natural conſcience. The Spirit does not work by giving a teſtimony, but by aſſiſting natural conſcience to do its work. Natural conſcience is the inſtrument in the hand of God, to accuſe, condemn, terrify, and to urge to duty. The Spirit of God leads men into the conſideration of their danger, and makes them to be affected therewith, Prov xx. 27. *The ſpirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly.*" Stoddard's *Guide to Chriſt*, page 44.

ping,

ping, devils coming, and the like, not to convince persons of things that are true, and revealed in the word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless determinations; as that their day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a resolution immediately to cut them off, &c.

And the terrors which some persons have, are very much owing to the particular constitution and temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest, than that some persons are of such a temper and frame, that their imaginations are more strongly impressed with every thing they are affected with, than others; and the impression on the imagination re-acts on the affection, and raises that still higher; and so affection and imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their affection is raised to a vast height, and the person is swallowed up, and loses all possession of himself *.

And some speak of a great sight they have of their wickedness, who really, when the matter comes to be well examined into and throughly weighed, are found to have little or no convictions of conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard heart, and how their heart lies like a stone; when truly they have none of those things in their minds or thoughts, wherein the hardness of mens heart does really consist. They tell of a dreadful load and sink of sin, a heap of black and loathsome filthiness within them; when, if the matter be carefully inquired into, they have not in view any thing wherein the corruption of nature does truly consist, nor have they any thought of any particular thing wherein their hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any exercises at all of corruption in them. And many think also they have great convictions of their actual sins, who truly have none. They tell how their sins are set in order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a row, with a dreadful frightful appearance; when really they have not so much as one of the sins they have been guilty of in the course of their lives, coming into view, that they are affected with the aggravations of.

And if persons have had great terrors which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of

* The famous Mr Perkins distinguishes between "those sorrows that "come through convictions of con- "science, and melancholic passions "arising only from mere imagina- "tions, strongly conceived in the "brain; which he says, usually come "on a sudden, like lightening into a "house." vol. 1. of his works, page 385.

God,

God, it doth not thence follow that their terrors must needs issue in true comfort. The unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God, (after he has been striving), by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every woman who is really in travail, that brings forth a real child; but it may be a monstrous production, without any thing of the form or properties of human nature belonging to it. Pharaoh's chief baker, after he had lain in the dungeon with Joseph, had a vision that raised his hopes, and he was lifted up out of the dungeon, as well as the chief butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if comforts and joys do not only come after great terrors and awakenings, but there be an appearance of *such* preparatory convictions and humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by *such* steps, and in *such* a method, as has frequently been observable in true converts; this is no certain sign that the light and comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following reasons,

*First*, As the devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace. If Satan can counterfeit those effects of God's Spirit which are special, divine and sanctifying; so that there shall be a very great resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those works of God's Spirit which are common, and which men, while they are yet his own children, are the subjects of. These works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no works of God that are so high and divine, and above the powers of nature, and out of the reach of the power of all creatures, as those works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the creature in his own image, and makes it to be a partaker of the divine nature. But if the devil can be the author of such resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferiour kind. And it is abundantly evident in fact, that there are false humiliations, and false submissions, as well as false comforts *. How far was Saul brought, though a very wicked

* The venerable Stoddard observes, "A man may say, that now "he can justify God however he deals "with him, and not be brought off "from his own righteousness; and "that some men do justify God, from "a partial conviction of the righte-"ousness of their condemnation; "conscience takes notice of their sin-"fulness, and tells them that they "may be righteously damned; as Pha-"raoh, who justified God, Exod. ix. "27. And they give some kind of "consent to it, but many times it "does not continue, they have on-"ly a pang upon them, that usual-"ly dies away after a little time." *Guide to Christ*, page 71.

man,

man, and of a haughty spirit, when he (though a great king) was brought, in conviction of his sin, as it were to fall down, all in tears, weeping aloud, before David his own subject, (and one that he had for a long time mortally hated, and openly treated as an enemy), and condemn himself before him, crying out, *Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil?* And at another time, *I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. 7. and chap. xxvi. 21. And yet Saul seems then to have had very little of the influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud monarch, in a pang of affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a subject that he hated, and still continued an enemy to; there doubtless may be appearances of great conviction and humiliation in men, before God, while they yet remain enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in men, who are terrified through fears of hell, a great appearance of their being brought off from their own righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all ways, although they are in many ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some ways of trusting in their own righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtil. Oftentimes a great degree of discouragement, as to many things they used to depend upon, is taken for humiliation: and that is called a submission to God, which is no absolute submission, but has some secret bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

*Secondly*, If the operations and effects of the Spirit of God, in the convictions and comforts of true converts, may be sophisticated, then the order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain order. If the devil can make A, B, and C, it is as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary order. The nature of divine things is harder for the devil to imitate, than their order. He can *exactly* imitate divine operations in their nature, though his counterfeits many be very much like them in external appearance; but he can exactly imitate their order. When counterfeits are made, there is no divine power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no order or method of operations and experiences, is any certain sign of their divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain evidence of grace, which Satan cannot do, and which

which it is impoſſible ſhould be brought to paſs by any power ſhort of divine.

*Thirdly*, We have no certain rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in thoſe operations and convictions which in themſelves are not ſpiritual and ſaving, and yet the perſon that is the ſubject of them, never be converted, but fall ſhort of ſalvation at laſt. There is no neceſſary connection in the nature of things, between any thing that a natural man may experience, while in a ſtate of nature, and the ſaving grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no connection in the nature of things, then there can be no known and certain connection at all, unleſs it be by divine revelation. But there is no revealed certain connection between a ſtate of ſalvation, and any thing that a natural man can be the ſubject of, before he believes in Chriſt. God has revealed no certain connection between ſalvation, and any qualifications in men, but only grace and its fruits. And therefore we do not find any legal convictions, or comforts following theſe legal convictions, in any certain method or order, ever once mentioned in the ſcripture, as certain ſigns of grace, or things peculiar to the ſaints; although we do find gracious operations and effects themſelves, ſo mentioned, thouſands of times. Which ſhould be enough with Chriſtians, who are willing to have the word of God, rather than their own philoſophy, and experiences, and conjectures, as their ſufficient and ſure guide in things of this nature.

*Fourthly*, Experience does greatly confirm, that perſons ſeeming to have convictions and comforts following one another in ſuch a method and order, as is frequently obſervable in true converts, is no certain ſign of grace *. I appeal to all thoſe miniſters in this land, who have had much occaſion of dealing with ſouls, in the late extraordinary ſeaſon, whether there has not been many who do not prove well, that have given a fair account of their experiences, and have ſeemed to be converted according to rule, *i. e.* with convictions and affections, ſucceeding diſtinctly and exactly, in that order and method, which has been ordinarily inſiſted on, as the order of the operations of the Spirit of God in converſion.

And as a ſeeming to have this diſtinctneſs as to ſteps and

* Mr Stoddard, who had much experience of things of this nature, long ago obſerved, that converted and unconverted men cannot be certainly diſtinguiſhed by the account they give of their experience: the ſame relation of experiences being common to both. And that many perſons have given a fair account of a work of converſion, that have carried well in the eye of the world for ſeveral years, but have not proved well at laſt. *Appeal to the learned*, p. 75. 76.

method,

method, is no certain sign that a person is converted; so a being without it, is no evidence that a person is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a demonstration, on scripture-principles, that a sinner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his sin and misery, and of his own emptiness and helplessness, and his just desert of eternal condemnation; and that therefore such convictions must be some way *implied* in what is wrought in his soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those things which are implied or presupposed in an act of faith in Christ, must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the soul, in so many successive and separate works of the Spirit, that shall be each one plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary, (as Mr Shepard observes), sometimes the change made in a saint, at first work, is like a confused chaos; so that the saints know not what to make of it. The manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: we, as it were, hear the sound of it, the effect of it is discernible; but no man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the way of the Spirit in the new birth, as in the first birth: Eccl. xi. 5. *Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God, that worketh all.* The ingenerating of a principle of grace in the soul, seems in scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. And therefore the church is called Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. And so is every particular believer, Matth. xii. 49. 50. And the conception of Christ in the womb of the blessed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed resemblance of the conception of Christ in the soul of a believer, by the power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, either in the womb, or heart that conceives this holy Child. The new creature may use that language in Psal. cxxxix. 14. 15. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret.* Concerning the generation of Christ, both in his person, and also in the hearts of his people, it may be said, as in Is. liii. 8. *Who can declare his generation?* We know not the works of God, that worketh all. *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing*, (Prov. xxv. 2.) and to have *his path as it were in the mighty waters, that his footsteps*

*may not be known:* and especially in the works of his Spirit on the hearts of men, which are the highest and chief of his works. And therefore it is said, Is. xl. 13. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?* It is to be feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain steps and methods. Experience plainly shews, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, in the method of his operations, in their conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernibly in the steps of a particular established scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A scheme of what is necessary, and according to a rule already received and established by common opinion, has a vast (though to many a very insensible) influence in forming persons notions of the steps and method of their own experiences. I know very well what their way is; for I have had much opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their experiences appear like a confused chaos, as Mr Shepard expresses it: but then these passages of their experience are picked out, that have most of the appearance of such particular steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the thoughts, and these are told of from time to time, in the relation they give: these parts grow brighter and brighter in their view; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure: and what they have experienced is insensibly strained to bring all to an exact conformity to the scheme that is established. And it becomes natural for ministers, who have to deal with them, and direct them that insist upon distinctness and clearness of method, to do so too. But yet there has been so much to be seen of the operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with souls, and are not blinded with a seven-fold vail of prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in the manner of his operating, that in many cases it is impossible to trace him, or find out his way.

What we have principally to do with, in our inquiries into our own state, or directions we give to others, is the *nature* of the effect that God has brought to pass in the soul. As to the steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that effect to pass, we may leave them to him. We are often in scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the *nature* of the fruits of the Spirit; but no where by the Spirit's *method* of producing them *.

Many

* Mr Shepard, speaking of the soul's closing with Christ, says, "As a "child cannot tell how his soul comes "into it, nor it may be when; but "afterwards

Many do greatly err in their notions of a clear work of converſion; calling that a clear work, where the ſucceſſive ſteps of influence, and method of experience is clear: whereas that indeed is the cleareſt work, (not where the order of *doing* is cleareſt, but) where the ſpiritual and divine nature of the work *done*, and effect *wrought*, is moſt clear.

IX. It is no certain ſign that the religious affections which perſons have are ſuch as have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they diſpoſe perſons to ſpend much time in religion, and to be zealouſly engaged in the external duties of worſhip.

This has, very unreaſonably, of late been looked upon as an argument againſt the religious affections which ſome have had, that they ſpend ſo much time in reading, praying, ſinging, hearing ſermons, and the like. It is plain from the ſcripture, that it is the tendency of true grace to cauſe perſons very much to delight in ſuch religious exerciſes. True grace had this effect on Anna the propheteſs; Luke ii. 37. *She departed not from the temple, but ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day.* And grace had this effect upon the primitive Chriſtians in Jeruſalem; Acts ii. 46. 47. *And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, praiſing God.* Grace made Daniel delight in the duty of prayer, and ſolemnly to attend it three times a day: as it alſo did David, Pſal. lv. 17. *Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray.* Grace makes the ſaints delight in ſinging praiſes to God: Pſal. cxxxv. 3. *Sing praiſes unto his name, for it is pleaſant.* And cxlvii. 1. *Praiſe ye the Lord: for it is good to ſing praiſes unto our God; for it is pleaſant, and praiſe is comely.* It alſo cauſes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: it makes the goſpel a joyful ſound to them, Pſal. lxxxix. 15. and makes the feet of

" afterwards it ſees and feels that " life; ſo that he were as bad as a " beaſt, that ſhould deny an immortal " ſoul; ſo here." *Parable of the ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 171.

" If the man do not know the time " of his converſion, or firſt cloſing " with Chriſt; the miniſter may not " draw any peremptory concluſion " from thence, that he is not godly." *Stoddard's Guide to Chriſt*, p. 83.

" Do not think there is no com- " punction, or ſenſe of ſin, wrought in " the ſoul, becauſe you cannot ſo clear- " ly diſcern and feel it; nor the time " of the working, and firſt beginning " of it. I have known many that " have come with their complaints, " that they *were never humbled*, " *they never felt it ſo*; yet there it " hath been, and many times they " have ſeen it, by the other ſpecta- " cles, and bleſſed God for it." *Shepard's Sound believer*, page 38. The late impreſſion in Boſton.

thoſe who publiſh theſe good tidings, to be beautiful; Iſ. lii. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!* &c. It makes them love God's public worſhip; Pſal. xxvi. 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy houſe, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* And xxvii. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.* Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. 2. &c.—*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hoſts! my ſoul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.—Yea, the ſparrow hath found an houſe, and the ſwallow a neſt for herſelf, where ſhe may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hoſts, my King, and my God. Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe: they will be ſtill praiſing thee. Bleſſed is the man in whoſe heart are the ways of them, who paſſing through the valley of Baca,—go from ſtrength to ſtrength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*—ver. 10. *A day in thy courts is better than a thouſand.*

This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, perſons being diſpoſed to abound and to be zealouſly engaged in the external exerciſes of religion, and to ſpend much time in them, is no ſure evidence of grace; becauſe ſuch a diſpoſition is found in many that have no grace. So it was with the Iſraelites of old, whoſe ſervices were abominable to God; they attended the *new moons, and ſabbaths, and calling of aſſemblies, and ſpread forth their hands, and made many prayers,* Iſ. i. 12.—15. So it was with the Phariſees; they *made long prayers, and faſted twice a week.* Falſe religion may cauſe perſons to be loud and earneſt in prayer: Iſ. lviii. 4. *Ye ſhall not faſt as ye do this day, to cauſe your voice to be heard on high.* That religion which is not ſpiritual and ſaving, may cauſe men to delight in religious duties and ordinances: Iſ. lviii. 2. *Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteouſneſs, and forſook not the ordinance of their God: they aſk of me the ordinances of juſtice: they take delight in approaching to God.* It may cauſe them to take delight in hearing the word of God preached; as it was with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely ſong of one that hath a pleaſant voice, and can play well on an inſtrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* So it was with Herod; he

he *heard* John the Baptiſt *gladly*, Mark vi. 20. So it was with others of his hearers, *for a ſeaſon they rejoiced in his light*, John v. 35. So the ſtony-ground hearers *heard the word with joy*.

Experience ſhews, that perſons, from falſe religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external exerciſes of religion; yea, to give themſelves up to them, and devote almoſt their whole time to them. Formerly a ſort of people were very numerous in the Romiſh church, called *recluſes*, who forſook the world, and utterly abandoned the ſociety of mankind, and ſhut themſelves up cloſe, in a narrow cell, with a vow never to ſtir out of it, nor to ſee the face of any of mankind any more; (unleſs that they might be viſited in caſe of ſickneſs); to ſpend all their days in the exerciſes of devotion and converſe with God. There were alſo in old time, great multitudes called Hermites and Anchorites, that left the world to ſpend all their days in loneſome deſarts, to give themſelves up to religious contemplations and exerciſes of devotion; ſome ſorts of them having no dwellings, but the caves and vaults of the mountains, and no food, but the ſpontaneous productions of the earth.—I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew, (the houſes adjoining one to another), and had much opportunity daily to obſerve him; who appeared to me the devouteſt perſon that ever I ſaw in my life; great part of his time being ſpent in acts of devotion, at his eaſtern window, which opened next to mine, ſeeming to be moſt earneſtly engaged, not only in the day-time, but ſometimes whole nights.

X. Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much diſpoſe perſons with their mouths to praiſe and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been juſt now obſerved, of abounding and ſpending much time in the external exerciſes of religion, and was alſo hinted before; but becauſe many ſeem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when perſons appear greatly diſpoſed to praiſe and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praiſes, and affectionately to be calling on others to praiſe and extol him, I thought it deſerved a more particular conſideration.

No Chriſtian will make it an argument againſt a perſon, that he ſeems to have ſuch a diſpoſition. Nor can it reaſonably be looked upon as an evidence for a perſon, if thoſe things that have been already obſerved and proved, be duly conſidered,

ed, *viz.* that persons, without grace, may have high affections towards God and Christ, and that their affections, being strong, may fill their mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the things they are affected with, and that there may be counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain sign of grace, if we consider what instances the scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this, in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles; Mark ii. 12. *And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.* So Matth. ix. 8. and Luke v. 26. Also Matth. xv. 31. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.* So we are told, that on occasion of Christ's raising the son of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 16. *There came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.* So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke iv. 15. *And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.* And how did they praise him with loud voices, crying, *Hosanna to the son of David, hosanna in the highest; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that *all men glorified God for that which was done*, Acts iv. 21. When the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, heard from Paul and Barnabas, that God would reject the Jews, and take the Gentiles to be his people in their room, they were affected with this goodness of God to the Gentiles, *and glorified the word of the Lord:* but all that did so were not true believers; but only a certain elect number of them; as is intimated in the account we have of it, Acts xiii. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* So of old the children of Israel at the Red sea, *sang God's praise; but soon forgat his works.* And the Jews in Ezekiel's time, *with their mouth shewed much love, while their heart went after their covetousness.* And it is foretold of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should shew a forwardness to glorify God; Is. lxvi. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated*

*you,*

*you, that caſt you out for my name's ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified.*

It is no certain ſign that a perſon is graciouſly affected, if in the midſt of his hopes and comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited mercy to him that is ſo unworthy, and ſeems greatly to extol and magnify free grace. Thoſe that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity againſt God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindneſs from God, cry out of their unworthineſs, and magnify God's undeſerved goodneſs to them, from no other conviction of their ill-deſervings, and from no higher principle, than Saul had, who while he yet remained with unſubdued pride and enmity againſt David, was brought, though a king, to acknowledge his unworthineſs, and cry out, *I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly*, and with great affection and admiration, to magnify and extol David's unmerited and unexampled kindneſs to him, 1 Sam. xxv. 16.—19. and xxvi. 21.: and from no higher principle, than that from whence Nebuchadnezzar was affected with God's diſpenſations, that he ſaw and was the ſubject of, and praiſes, extols and honours the King of heaven; and both he, and Darius, in their high affections, call upon all nations to praiſe God, Dan. iii. 28. 29. 30. and iv. 1. 2. 3. 34. 35. 37. and vi. 25. 26. 27.

XI. It is no ſign that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make perſons that have them, exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good eſtate.

It is an argument with ſome, againſt perſons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be aſſured of their good eſtate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favour of God; ſuppoſing that there is no ſuch thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and abſolute aſſurance of hope; unleſs it be in ſome very extraordinary circumſtances; as in the caſe of martyrdom: contrary to the doctrine of Proteſtants, which has been maintained by their moſt celebrated writers againſt the Papiſts; and contrary to the plaineſt ſcripture-evidence. It is manifeſt, that it was a common thing for the ſaints that we have a hiſtory or particular account of in ſcripture, to be aſſured. God in the plaineſt and moſt poſitive manner, revealed and teſtified his ſpecial favour to Noah, Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, Moſes, Daniel, and others. Job often ſpeaks of his ſincerity and uprightneſs with the greateſt imaginable confidence and aſſurance, often calling God to witneſs to it; and ſays plainly,

plainly, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I ſhall ſee him for myſelf, and not another*, Job xix. 25. &c. David, throughout the book of Pſalms, almoſt every where ſpeaks without any heſitancy, and in the moſt poſitive manner, of God as his God; glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his ſhield, ſalvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 Kings xx. 3 Jeſus Chriſt, in his dying diſcourſe with his eleven diſciples, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John, (which was as it were Chriſt's laſt will and teſtament to his diſciples, and to his whole church), often declares his ſpecial and everlaſting love to them, in the plaineſt and moſt poſitive terms; and promiſes them a future participation with him in his glory, in the moſt abſolute manner; and tells them at the ſame time, that he does ſo, to the end, that their joy might be *full*; John xv. 11. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* See alſo at the concluſion of his whole diſcourſe, Chap. xvi. 33. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Chriſt was not afraid of ſpeaking too plainly and poſitively to them; he did not deſire to hold them in the leaſt ſuſpence. And he concluded that laſt diſcourſe of his, with a prayer in their preſence, wherein he ſpeaks poſitively to his Father of thoſe eleven diſciples, as having all of them ſavingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their ſakes he ſanctified himſelf; and that his will was, that they ſhould be with him in his glory: and tells his Father, that he ſpake theſe things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, ver. 13. By theſe things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Chriſt's deſigns, and the contrived ordering and diſpoſition Chriſt makes of things in his church, that there ſhould be ſufficient and abundant proviſion made, that his ſaints might have full aſſurance of their future glory.

The apoſtle Paul, through all his epiſtles, ſpeaks in an aſſured ſtrain; ever ſpeaking poſitively of his ſpecial relation to Chriſt, his Lord and Maſter and Redeemer, and his intereſt in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endleſs to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I ſhall mention but three or four: Gal. ii. 20. *Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son*

*Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Phil. i. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day.*

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly shew it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. *The covenant is ordered in all things and sure:* the promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Heb. vi. 17. 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose, as the saints strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases, was not attainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified Heb. ix. 9. if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, that *all* Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. i. 5.—8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming of Christians, and an argument of something very blameable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no, 2 Cor xiii. 5. *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* And it is implied that it is an argument of a

very blameable negligence in Christians, if they practice Christian ty after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, in that 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.* And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians knowing their interests in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostles tell us by what means *Christians* (and not only *apostles* and *martyrs*) were wont to know this; 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* And 1 John ii. 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And ver. 5. *Hereby know we that we are in him.* Chap. iii. 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* ver. 19. *Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* ver. 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* So Chap. iv. 13. and Chap. v. 2. and ver. 19.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects of seem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because the affections they have are attended with an exceeding confidence that their state is good, and their affections divine †. Nothing can be certainly argued from their confidence, how great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar, and appropriating language in prayer, *My Father, my dear*

† "O professor, look carefully to your "foundation: *Be not high minded, but "fear.* You have, it may be, done "and suffered many things in and for "religion; you have excellent gifts "and sweet comforts; a warm zeal "for God, and high confidence of "your integrity: all this may be "right, for ought that I, or (it may "be) you know: but yet, it is pos- "sible it may be false also. You have "sometimes judged yourselves, and "pronounced yourselves upright; "but remember your final sentence "is not yet pronounced by your Judge. "And what if God weigh you over "again, in his more equal balance, "and should say, *Mene, Tekel, Thou "art weighed in the balance, and art "found wanting?* What a confound- "ed man wilt thou be, under such "a sentence! *Quæ splendent in con- "spectu hominis, sordent in conspectu "Judicis;* Things that are highly "esteemed of men, are an abomina- "nation in the sight of God: he seeth "not as men seeth. Thy heart may "be false, and thou not know it: "yea, it may be false, and thou "strongly confident of its integrity." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity,* Chap. ii sect 5.

"Some hypocrites are a great deal "more confident than many saints." *Stoddard's Discourse on the way to know sincerity and hypocrisy,* p. 128.

*Redeemer,*

*Redeemer*, *my sweet Saviour*, *my beloved*, and the like;—and it is a common thing for him to use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, *I know certainly that God is my Father; I know so surely as there is a God in heaven, that he is my God*; *I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there*; *I know that God is now manifesting himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me*; and seems to have done for ever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to contemn all that so much as intimate or suggest that there is some reason to doubt or fear whether all is right; such things are no signs at all that it is indeed so as he is confident it is *. Such an over-bearing, high-handed and violent sort of confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show in the sight of men, which is to be seen in many, has not the countenance of a true Christian assurance: it savours more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were saints, and the most eminent of saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their eyes, and thank him for the great distinction he had made between them and other men; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the suggestion; John ix. 40. *And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?* If they had more of the spirit of the Publican, with their confidence, who in a sense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, and cried out of himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more of the aspect of the confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self flattery, self-exaltation, and self-confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high opi-

* "Doth the work of faith in "some believers, bear upon its top- "branches, the full ripe-fruits of a "blessed assurance? Lo, what strong "confidence, and high built persua- "sions of an interest in God, have "sometimes been found in unsancti- "fied ones! Yea so strong may "this false assurance be, that they "dare boldly venture to go to the "judgement-seat of God, and there "defend it. Doth the Spirit of God "fill the heart of the assured believer "with joy unspeakable, and full of "glory, giving them, through faith, "a prelibation or foretaste of heaven "itself, in those first-fruits of it? "how near to this comes what the "apostle supposes may be found in "apostates!" *Flavel's Husbandry spiritualized*, Chap. xii.

nion of themſelves, and confidence of their happy circumſtances, be as high and ſtrong as mountains, and as violent as a tempeſt, when once conſcience is blinded, and convictions killed, with falſe, high affections, and thoſe forementioned principles let looſe, fed up and prompted by falſe joys and comforts, excited by ſome pleaſing imaginations impreſſed by Satan, transforming himſelf into an angel of light.

When once a hypocrite is thus eſtabliſhed in a falſe hope, he has not thoſe things to cauſe him to call his hope in queſtion, that oftentimes are the occaſion of the doubting of true ſaints; as, *firſt*, he has not that cautious ſpirit, that great ſenſe of the vaſt importance of a ſure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true ſaints increaſe awakening and caution, and a lively ſenſe how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, juſt, and omniſcient Judge. But falſe comforts put an end to theſe things, and dreadfully ſtupify the mind. *Secondly*, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindneſs, and the deceitfulneſs of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own underſtanding, that the true ſaint has. Thoſe that are deluded with falſe diſcoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and underſtanding. *Thirdly*, The devil does not aſſault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true ſaint. The devil is a great enemy to a true Chriſtian hope, not only becauſe it tends greatly to the comfort of him that hath it, but alſo becauſe it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cheriſh grace in the heart, and a great incentive to ſtrictneſs and diligence in the Chriſtian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things eſtabliſhes his intereſt in him that has it. A hypocrite may retain his hope without oppoſition, as long as he lives, the devil never diſturbing it, not attempting to diſturb it. But there is perhaps no true Chriſtian but what has his hope aſſaulted by him. Satan aſſaulted Chriſt himſelf, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: and the ſervant is not above his Maſter, nor the diſciple above his Lord; it is enough for the diſciple, that is moſt privileged in this world, to be as his Maſter. *Fourthly*, He who has a falſe hope, has not that ſight of his own corruptions, which the ſaint has. A true Chriſtian has ten times ſo much to do with his heart, and its corruptions, as an hypocrite: and the ſins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackneſs; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very myſterious thing, that any grace can be conſiſtent with ſuch corruption, or ſhould be in ſuch a heart.

But

But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of which are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: and the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; which often cry down works, and mens own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites Mr Shepard, in his exposition of the Parable of the ten virgins, distinguishes by the names of *legal* and *evangelical* hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such an one, in my life, that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are the very same kind of impulses and supposed revelations, (sometimes with texts of scripture, and sometimes without), that so many of late have had concerning future events; calling these impulses about their good estate, the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall shew hereafter. Those that have had visions and impulses about other things, it has generally been to reveal such things as they are desirous and fond of: and no wonder that persons who give heed to such things, have the same sort of visions or impressions about their own eternal salvation, to reveal to them that their sins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favour with God, *&c.* and especially when they earnestly seek, expect and wait for evidence of their election and salvation this way, as the surest and most glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience, that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident: they suppose that the great JEHOVAH has declared these and those things to them; and having his immediate testimony, a strong confidence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to say, *I know this or that;—I know certainly;—I am as sure as that I have a being*, and the like: and they despise all argument and inquiry in the case. And above all things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which

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is so pleasing, so suiting their self-love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, distinguished from most in the world in his favour, should make them strongly confident: especially when with their impulses and revelations they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known of several persons, that have had a fond desire of something of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them, and they have been earnestly pursuing the thing they have desired should come to pass, and have met with great difficulty and many discouragements in it, but at last have had an impression or supposed revelation that they should obtain what they sought; and they have looked upon it as a sure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to convince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that persons who are seeking their salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made confident of that, the same way.

The confidence of many of this sort of hypocrites, that Mr Shepard calls *evangelical hypocrites*, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immoveable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a holy frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: but this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin; they (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways; which is a sure evidence of their delusion *.

And here I cannot but observe, that there are certain doctrines often preached to the people, which need to be delivered with more caution and explanation than they frequently are;

* Mr Shepard speaks of it, as a "presumptuous peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil works." And says, That "the spirit will sigh, "and not sing in that bosom, whence "corrupt dispositions and passions "break out." And that "though men "in such frames may seem to maintain the consolation of the Spirit, "and not suspect their hypocrisy, under pretence of trusting the Lord's "mercy; yet they cannot avoid the "condemnation of the world." *Parable of the ten virgins*, Part I p. 139.

Dr Ames speaks of it as a thing, by which the peace of a wicked man may be distinguished from the peace of a godly man, "that the peace of a wicked man continues, whether he performs the duties of piety and righteousness, or no; provided those "crimes are avoided that appear horrid to nature itself." *Cases of conscience, lib.* III. Chap. vii.

for

for as they are by many underſtood, they tend greatly to eſtabliſh this deluſion and falſe confidence of hypocrites. The doctrines I ſpeak of are thoſe of *Chriſtians living by faith, not by ſight; their giving glory to God, by truſting him in the dark; living upon Chriſt, and not upon experiences; not making their good frames the foundation of their faith:* which are excellent and important doctrines indeed, rightly underſtood, but corrupt and deſtructive, as many underſtand them. The ſcripture ſpeaks of living or walking by faith, and not by ſight, in no other way than theſe, *viz.* a being governed by a reſpect to eternal things, that are the objects of faith, and are not ſeen, and not by a reſpect to temporal things, which are ſeen; and believing things revealed, that we never ſaw with bodily eyes; and alſo living by faith in the promiſe of future things, without yet ſeeing or enjoying the things promiſed, or knowing the way how they can be fulfilled. This will be eaſily evident to any one that looks over the ſcriptures, which ſpeak of *faith* in oppoſition to *ſight;* as 2 Cor. iv. 18. and v. 7. Heb. xi. 1. 8. 13. 17. 27. 29. Rom. viii. 24. John xx. 29. But this doctrine, as it is underſtood by many, is, that Chriſtians ought firmly to believe and truſt in Chriſt, without ſpiritual ſight or light, and although they are in a dark dead frame, and, for the preſent, have no ſpiritual experiences or diſcoveries. And it is truly the duty of thoſe who are thus in darkneſs, to come out of darkneſs into light, and believe. But that they ſhould confidently believe and truſt, while they yet remain without ſpiritual light or ſight, is an antiſcriptural and abſurd doctrine. The ſcripture is ignorant of any ſuch faith in Chriſt of the operation of God, that is not founded in a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt. That believing on Chriſt, which accompanies a title to everlaſting life, is a *ſeeing the Son, and believing on him,* John vi. 40. True faith in Chriſt is never exerciſed, any further than perſons *behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord,* and have *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt,* 2 Cor. iii. 18. and iv. 6. They into whoſe minds *the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, does not ſhine, they believe not,* 2 Cor. iv. 4. That faith, which is without ſpiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light, and of the day; but the preſumption of the children of darkneſs. And therefore to preſs and urge them to believe, without any ſpiritual light or ſight, tends greatly to help forward the deluſions of the prince of darkneſs. Men not only cannot exerciſe faith without ſome ſpiritual light, but they can exerciſe faith only juſt in ſuch proportion as they have ſpiritual light. Men will

will trust in God no further than they know him: and they cannot be in the exercise of faith in him one ace further than they have a sight of his fulness and faithfulness *in exercise*. Nor can they have the exercise of trust in God, any further than they are in a *gracious frame*. They that are in a dead carnal frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same thing as coming out of their bad frame, and turning to God: but to exhort men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their hope and peace, though they are not in a gracious frame, and continue still to be so, is the same thing in effect, as to exhort them confidently to trust in God, but not with a gracious trust: and what is that but a wicked presumption? It is just so impossible for men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively exercises of grace, or sensible Christian experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively exercises of grace, without the exercises of grace.

It is true, that it is the duty of God's people to trust in him when in darkness, and though they remain still in darkness, in that sense, that they ought to trust in God when the aspects of his providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their prayers, and many clouds gather, and many enemies surround them, with a formidable aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all events of providence seem to be against them, all circumstances seem to render the promises of God difficult to be fulfilled, and God must be trusted out of sight, *i. e.* when we cannot see which way it is possible for him to fulfil his word, every thing but God's mere word makes it look unlikely, so that if persons believe, they must hope against hope. Thus the ancient Patriarchs, and Job, and the Psalmist, and Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, and the apostle Paul gave glory to God by trusting in God in darkness. And we have many instances of such a glorious victorious faith in the eleventh of the Hebrews. But how different a thing is this, from trusting in God, without spiritual sight, and being at the same time in a dead and carnal frame!

There is also such a thing as spiritual light's being let into the soul in one way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a thing as the saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good estate, when they are destitute of some kinds of experience. As for instance, they may have clear views of God's sufficiency and faithfulness, and so confidently trust in him, and know that they are his children; and at the same time, not have those clear and sweet ideas of his love, as at other times: for it was thus with Christ himself in his last pas-

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sion. And they may have views of much of God's sovereignty, holiness, and allsufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and most encouraging hope in God's fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good estate. But how different things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual light or experience!

Those that thus insist on persons living by faith, when they have no experience, and are in very bad frames, are also very absurd in their notions of faith. What they mean by faith is, believing that they are in a good estate. Hence they count it a dreadful sin for them to doubt of their state, whatever frames they are in, and whatever wicked things they do, because it is the great and heinous sin of unbelief; and he is the best man, and puts most honour upon God, that maintains his hope of his good estate the most confidently and immoveably, when he has the least light or experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst and wickedest frame and way; because, forsooth, that is a sign that he is strong in faith, giving glory to God, and against hope believes in hope. But what Bible do they learn this notion of faith out of, that it is a man's confidently believing that he is in a good estate *? If this be faith, the Pharisees had faith in an eminent degree; some of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. The scripture represents faith, as that by which men are *brought into* a good estate; and therefore it cannot be the same thing, as believing that they *are already* in a good estate. To suppose that faith consists in persons believing that they are in a good estate, is in effect the same thing, as to suppose that faith consists in a person's believing that he has faith, or in believing that he believes.

Indeed persons doubting of their good estate, may in several respects *arise from* unbelief. It may be from unbelief, or because they have so little faith, that they have so little *evidence* of their good estate: if they had more experience of the actings

* "Men do not know that they are "godly, by believing that they are "godly. We know many things by "faith, Heb. xi. 3. *By faith we understand that the worlds were made by "the word of God.* Faith is *the evidence of things not seen,* Heb. xi. 1. "Thus men know the Trinity of "persons of the Godhead; that Jesus "Christ is the Son of God; that he "that believes in him will have eternal life; the resurrection of the "dead. And if God should tell a "saint that he hath grace, he might "know it by believing the word of "God. But it is not this way, that "godly men do know that they have "grace It is not revealed in the word, "and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's nature of saving conversion,* p. 83. 84.

of faith, and so more experience of the exercise of grace, they would have clearer evidence that their state was good; and so their doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their state may be from unbelief thus, when though there be many things that are good evidences of a work of grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a state of favour with God, because it is *they*, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to anger against them. Their doubts in such a case arise from unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient sense *of*, and reliance *on* the infinite riches of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. They may also be from unbelief, when they doubt of their state, because of the mystery of God's dealings with them: they are not able to reconcile such dispensations with God's favour to them: or when they doubt whether they have any interest in the promises, because the promises from the aspect of providence appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the difficulties that are in the way, are so many and great. Such doubting arises from want of dependence upon God's almighty power, and his knowledge and wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such persons, their unbelief, and their doubting of their state, are not the same thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as these last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of the present exercises and experiences of it, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state: men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the prevalence of their lusts, and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope, should be kept alive, in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle is put out; or to maintain the bright sun-shine in the air, when the sun is gone down. Distant experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, will never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance; but that sickens and decays upon it, as necessarily as a little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented, that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances; but on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and merciful constitution of things, which God hath established,

ed, that it ſhould be ſo. For ſo hath God contrived and conſtituted things, in his diſpenſations towards his own people, that when their *love* decays, and the exerciſes of it fail, or become weak, *fear* ſhould ariſe; for then they need it to reſtrain them from ſin, and to excite them to care for the good of their ſouls, and ſo to ſtir them up to watchfulneſs and diligence in religion: but God hath ſo ordered that when love riſes, and is in vigorous exerciſe, then fear ſhould vaniſh, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exerciſe, to reſtrain them from ſin, and ſtir them up to their duty. There are no other principles, which human nature is under the influence of, that will ever make men conſcientious, but one of theſe two, *fear* or *love*: and therefore, if one of theſe ſhould not prevail as the other decayed, God's people when fallen into dead and carnal frames, when love is aſleep, would be lamentably expoſed indeed. And therefore God has wiſely ordained, that theſe two oppoſite principles of love and fear, ſhould riſe and fall, like the two oppoſite ſcales of a balance; when one riſes, the other ſinks. As light and darkneſs neceſſarily and unavoidably ſucceed each other; if light prevails, ſo much does darkneſs ceaſe, and no more; and if light decays, ſo much does darkneſs prevail: ſo it is in the heart of a child of God; if divine love decays and falls aſleep, and luſt prevails, the light and joy of hope goes out, and dark fear and doubting ariſes; and if on the contrary, divine love prevails, and comes into lively exerciſe, this brings in the brightneſs of hope, and drives away black luſt, and fear with it. Love is the *ſpirit of adoption*, or the childlike principle; if that ſlumbers, men fall under fear, which is the *ſpirit of bondage*, or the ſervile principle: and ſo on the contrary. And if it be ſo, that love, or the ſpirit of adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and gives full aſſurance; agreeable to that of the apoſtle, 1 John iv. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love caſts out fear.* Theſe two oppoſite principles of luſt and holy love, bring hope and fear into the hearts of God's children, in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without ſomething adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the diſtemper of melancholy, doctrinal ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong inſtruction, falſe principles, peculiar temptations, *&c.*

Fear is caſt out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love: nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit, but when love is aſleep. At ſuch a time, in vain is all the

saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace, and get assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.

They therefore do directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be confident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion of *living by faith*, and *not by sight*, and *trusting God in the dark*, and *living upon Christ, and not upon experiences*; and warn them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. And it has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wickedness rages, and reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives; under a notion of honouring God, by *hoping against hope*, and confidently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

Persons cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences of the exercises of grace, merely because they take them and use them as evidences of grace; for there are no other evidences that they can or ought to take. But then may persons be said to live upon their experiences, when they make a righteousness of them; and instead of keeping their eye on God's glory, and Christ's excellency, they turn their eyes off these objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their minds, by viewing their own attainments, and high experiences, and the great things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own eyes, and are rich and increased with goods in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an esteem of them, on the same account, as they have of themselves: this is living on experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the sight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from a mere improving experiences as evidences of an interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this digression, I would mention one thing more under the general head that I am upon.

XII. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that any are the subjects of, from this, that the outward manifestations of them, and the relation persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the

the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity, and win their hearts.

The true saints have not such a spirit of discerning, that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel, nor see, in the heart of another *. There is nothing in others, that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances; but the scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit; 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* Is. xi. 3. *He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears* †. They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things; either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgement; or that they have a great degree of pride and self-confidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the saints to receive them cordially into their charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and

* "Men may have the knowledge "of their own conversion: the know- "ledge that other men have of it is "uncertain; because no man can "look into the heart of another, "and see the workings of grace "there." *Stoddard's nature of saving conversion*, chap. xv. at the beginning.

† Mr Stoddard observes, That "all "visible signs are common to convert- "ed and unconverted men; and a re- "lation of experiences, among the "rest." *Appeal to the learned*, p. 75.

"O how hard is it for the eye of "man to discern betwixt chaff and "wheat! and how many upright "hearts are now censured, whom "God will clear! how many false "hearts are now approved, whom "God will condemn! Men ordinari- "ly have no convictive proofs, but "only probable symptoms; which at "most beget but a conjectural know- "ledge of another's state. And they "that shall peremptorily judge either "way, may possibly wrong the gene- "ration of the upright, or on the "other side, absolve and justify the "wicked. And truly, considering "what hath been said, it is no won- "der that dangerous mistakes are so "frequently made in this matter." *Flavel's husbandry spiritualized*, chap. xii.

bright,

bright, even so as entirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the church of God, for such bright professors, that are received as eminent saints, among the saints, to fall away and come to nothing *. And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things that have been already observed; what things it has been shown, may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a sort of affection towards God, that bears a great resemblance of dear love to him; and so a kind of love to the brethren, and great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, and sorrow for sin, and reverence, submission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for the interest of religion and the good of souls. And these affections may come after great awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation; and counterfeit love and joy, and other affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same order, that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, and may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet texts of scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and may dispose them with their mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to

* "Be not offended, if you see "great cedars fall, stars fall from "heaven, great professors die and de- "cay: do not think they be all such: "do not think that the elect shall "fall. Truly, some are such that "when they fall, one would think a "man truly sanctified might fall "away, as the Arminians think; "1 John ii. 19. *They were not of us.* "I speak this, because the Lord is "shaking; and I look for great apo- "stasies: for God is trying all his "friends, through all the Christian "world. In Germany what profes- "sion was there! who would have "thought it? The Lord who de- "lights to manifest that openly, which "was hid secretly, sends a sword and "they fall." *Shepard's Parab.* Part I. p. 118. 119.

"The saints may approve thee, "and God condemn thee; Rev. iii. "1. *Thou hast a name that thou livest,* "*and art dead.* Men may say, There "is a true Nathanael; and God may "say, There is a self cozening Phari- "see. Reader, thou hast heard of Ju- "das and Demas, of Ananias and "Sapphira, of Hymeneus and Phile- "tus, once renowned and famous "professors, and thou hast heard how "they proved at last." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity,* Chap. ii. sect. 5.

praise

praiſe him, crying out of their unworthineſs, and extolling free grace. And may, moreover, diſpoſe them to abound in the external duties of religion, ſuch as prayer, hearing the word preached, ſinging, and religious conference; and theſe things attended with a great reſemblance of a Chriſtian aſſurance, in its greateſt height, when the ſaints mount on eagles wings, above all darkneſs and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all theſe things, and yet there be nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the deluſions of Satan, and the wicked and deceitful heart. To which I may add, that all theſe things may be attended with a ſweet natural temper, and a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, and a long acquaintance with the ſaints way of talking and of expreſſing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and ſubtilty in accommodating their expreſſions and manner of ſpeaking to the diſpoſitions and notions of the hearers, and a taking decency of expreſſion and behaviour, formed by a good education. How great therefore may the reſemblance be, as to all outward expreſſions and appearances, between an hypocrite and a true ſaint! Doubtleſs it is the glorious prerogative of the omniſcient God, as the great ſearcher of hearts, to be able well to ſeparate between ſheep and goats. And what an indecent, ſelf-exaltation, and arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really ſincere and upright before God, and who are not!

Many ſeem to lay great weight on that, and to ſuppoſe it to be what may determine them with reſpect to others real piety, when they not only tell a plauſible ſtory, but when, in giving an account of their experiences, they make ſuch a repreſentation, and ſpeak after ſuch a manner, that they *feel* their talk; that is to ſay, when their talk ſeems to harmonize with their own experience, and their hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them ſay, and drawn out by it, in dear love to them. But there is not that certainty in ſuch things, and that full dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true ſaint greatly delights in holineſs; it is a moſt beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in ſavingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before periſhing ſoul, appears to him a moſt glorious work: no wonder therefore, that his heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable account of this work, wrought on his own heart, and when he ſees in him probable appearances of holineſs; whether thoſe pleaſing

appearances

appearances have any thing real to anſwer them, or no. And if he uſes the ſame words, which are commonly made uſe of, to expreſs the affections of true ſaints, and tells of many things following one another in an order, agreeable to the method of the experience of him that hears him, and alſo ſpeaks freely and boldly, and with an air of aſſurance; no wonder that the other thinks his experiences harmonize with his own. And if beſides all this, in giving his relation, he ſpeaks with much affection; and above all, if in ſpeaking, he ſeems to ſhew much affection to him to whom he ſpeaks, ſuch an affection as the Galatians did to the apoſtle Paul; theſe things will naturally have a powerful influence, to affect and draw his hearer's heart, and open wide the doors of his charity towards him. David ſpeaks as one who had felt Ahithophel's talk, and had once a ſweet ſavour and reliſh of it. And therefore exceeding great was his ſurpriſe and diſappointment, when he fell; it was almoſt too much for him. Pſal. lv. 12. 13. 14. *It was not an enemy—then I could have borne it;—but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took ſweet counſel together, and walked unto the houſe of God in company.*

It is with profeſſors of religion, eſpecially ſuch as become ſo in a time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the bloſſoms in the ſpring *; there are vaſt numbers of them upon the trees, which all look fair and promiſing; but yet very many of them never come to any thing. And many of thoſe, that in a little time wither up, and drop off, and rot under the trees; yet for a while, look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only ſo, but ſmell ſweet, and ſend forth a pleaſant odour; ſo that we cannot, by any of our ſenſes, certainly diſtinguiſh thoſe bloſſoms which have in them that ſecret virtue, which will afterwards appear in the fruit, and that inward ſolidity and ſtrength which ſhall enable them to bear, and cauſe them to be perfected by the hot ſummer ſun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colours and ſmell of the bloſſom, that we muſt judge by. So new converts, (profeſſedly ſo), in their talk about things of religion, may appear fair, and be very ſavoury, and the ſaints may think they talk feelingly. They may reliſh

* A time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, reviving religion, and producing the pleaſant appearances of it, in new converts, is in ſcripture compared to this very thing, *viz.* the ſpring-ſeaſon, when the benign influences of the heavens cauſe the bloſſoms to put forth. Cant. ii. 11. 12.

their

their talk, and imagine they perceive a divine favour in it; and yet all may come to nothing.

— It is strange how hardly men are brought to be contented with the rules and directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other rules of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no directions or counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others sincerity; *viz.* that we should judge of the tree chiefly by the fruit: but yet this will not do; but other ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous consequences, of this arrogant setting up mens wisdom above the wisdom of Christ. I believe many saints have gone much out of the way of Christ's word, in this respect: and some of them have been chastised with whips, and (I had almost said) scorpions, to bring them back again. But many things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily, those who have gone fartheſt this way, that have been most highly conceited of their faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the state of mens souls, have been hypocrites, who have known nothing of true religion.

In the parable of the wheat and tares, it is said, Matth. xiii. 26. *When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.* As though the tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the wheat, *until then*, as Mr Flavel observes†; who mentions it as an observation of Jerome's, that *wheat and tares are so much alike, until the blade of the wheat comes to bring forth the ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them.* And then, Mr Flavel adds, "How difficult so "ever it be to discern the difference between wheat and tares; "yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate "them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man, can "discern the difference between special and common grace. "For all saving graces in the saints, have their counterfeits in "hypocrites; there are similar works in those, which a spiri- "tual and very judicious eye may easily mistake, for the sa- "ving and genuine effects of a sanctifying spirit."

As it is the ear or the fruit which distinguishes the wheat from the tares, so this is the true Shibboleth, that he who stands as judge at the passages of Jordan, makes use of to dis-

† Husbandry spiritualized, Chap. xii.



tinguish

tinguish those that shall pass over Jordan into the true Canaan, from those that should be slain at the passages. For the Hebrew word Shibboleth, signifies an ear of corn. And perhaps the more full pronounciation of Jephthah's friends, Shibboleth, may represent a full ear with fruit in it, typifying the fruits of the friends of Christ, the antitype of Jephthah; and the more lean pronounciation of the Ephraimites his enemies, may represent their empty ears, typifying the show of religion in hypocrites, without substance and fruit. This is agreeable to the doctrine we are abundantly taught in scripture, *viz.* That he who is set to judge those that pass through death, whether they have a right to enter into the heavenly Canaan or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every man according to his works.

We seem to be taught the same things, by the rules given for the priest's discerning the leprosy. In many cases it was impossible for the priest to determine whether a man had the leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow inspection of the appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the appearances would come to, and had shut up the person who shewed himself to him, one seven days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the hair, which grew out of the spot that was shewed him, which was as it were the fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this head, I would say something to a strange notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from heaven, by their love flowing out to them in an extraordinary manner. They argue thus, that their love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian love: and if it be a true Christian love, the Spirit of God must be the author of it: and inasmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows certainly, whether others are the children of God or no, and is a spirit of truth, is pleased, by an uncommon influence upon them, to cause their love to flow out, in an extraordinary manner, towards such a person, as a child of God; it must needs be that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that person is a child of God. But such persons might be convinced of the falseness of their reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the children of God, who they think are the children of God, and whom they have no reason to think otherwise of, from all that they

they can see in them, though God, who searches the hearts, knows them not to be his children. If it be their duty, then it is good, and the want of it sin; and therefore, surely, the Spirit of God may be the author of it: the Spirit of God, without being a spirit of falsehood, may in such a case assist a person to do his duty, and keep him from sin. But then they argue from the uncommon degree and special manner, in which their love flows out to the person; which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the object to be a child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great degree, though God, from other things which he sees, that are out of sight to them, knows them not to be so. It is mens duty to love all whom they are bound in charity to look upon as the children of God, with a vastly dearer affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost capacity of our nature, so it is our duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his members, with an exceeding dear affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would by his Spirit keep us from sin, and enable us to do our duty: and may not his Spirit answer our prayers, and enable us to do our duty, in a particular instance, without lying? if he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his people to do their duty in some instances, because he cannot do it without being a spirit of falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our duty when he pleases, and on what occasion he pleases. When persons think others are his children, God may have other ends in causing their exceedingly endeared love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their opinion of them be right or no: he may have that merciful end in it, to enable them to do their duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite evil, sin. And will they say God shall not show them that mercy in such a case? If I am at a distance from home, and hear, that in my absence, my house is burnt, but my family have, in some extraordinary manner, all escaped the flames; and every thing in the circumstances of the story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible; it would be sin in me, in such a case, not to feel a very great degree of gratitude to God, though the story indeed be not true. And is not God so sovereign, that he may if he pleases, shew me that mercy on that occasion, and enable me to do my duty in

a much further degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the charge of deceitfulness, in confirming a falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that error or mistake may be the occasion of a gracious exercise, and consequently a gracious influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6. *He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.* The apostle is speaking of those, who through erroneous and needless scruples, avoided eating legally unclean meats.—By this it is very evident, that there may be true exercises of grace, a true respect *to the Lord*, and particularly, a true thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous judgement and practice. And consequently, an error may be the occasion of those truly holy exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a degree the Spirit of God may give this holy exercise, on such an occasion.

This notion, of certainly discerning another's state, by love flowing out, is not only not founded on reason or scripture, but it is anti-scriptural, it is against the rules of scripture; which say not a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the fruits that are seen in them. And it is against the doctrines of scripture, which do plainly teach us, that the state of others souls towards God, cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the* hidden manna, *and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name writen, which* no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. And Rom. ii. 29. *He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.* That by this last expression, *whose praise is not of men, but of God*, the apostle has respect to the insufficiency of men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a Jew or no, (as they could easily see by outward marks, whether men were outwardly Jews), and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining voice in this matter, is confirmed by the same apostle's use of the phrase, in 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts:* and then shall every man have praise of God. The apostle, in the two foregoing verses, says, *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgement: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I*

*not*

*not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* And again, it is further confirmed, because the apostle in this second chapter to the Romans, directs his speech especially to those who had a high conceit of their own holiness, made their boast of God, and were confident of their own discerning, and that they knew God's will, and approved the things which were excellent, or tried the things that differ (as it is in the margin). ver. 19. *And were confident that they were guides of the blind, and a light to them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes;* and so took upon them to judge others. See ver. 1. and 17. 18. 19. 20.

And how arrogant must the notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others godliness, when that great apostle Peter pretends not to say any more concerning Sylvanus, than that he was *a faithful brother, as he supposed?* 1 Pet. v. 12. Though this Sylvanus appears to have been a very eminent minister of Christ, and an evangelist, and a famous light in God's church at that day, and an intimate companion of the apostles. See 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess. i. 1. and 2 Thess. i. 1.

# PART III.

## Shewing what are distinguishing Signs of truly gracious and holy Affections.

I Come now to the SECOND thing appertaining to the *trial* of religious affections, which was proposed, *viz.* To take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give such signs of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true affection from false in others; or to determine positively which of their neighbours are true professors,

and

and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of professors of religion, whom they are concerned with, so far as is necessary for their own safety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion; and though it be also beyond doubt, that the scriptures do abound with rules, which may be very serviceable to ministers, in counselling and conducting souls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state; yet, it is also evident, that it was never God's design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow-professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats: but that on the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end: for no more is ever to be expected from any signs, that are to be found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design, (as has been already observed), that such should know their good estate: nor is it desirable that they should; but, on the contrary, every way best that they should not; and we have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state that they are in, any other way, than by first coming out of the ill frame and way they are in.

Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the signs given in the word of God, that every saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every saint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for *every*, even the *least* act of grace is so. But it is through his defect to whom the signs are given. There is a twofold defect in that saint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him. *First*, A defect in the *object*,

or

or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I do not mean an essential defect; because I suppose the person to be a real saint; but a defect in degree: grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished. Things that are very small, we cannot clearly discern their form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: but yet if we should view the different embryos, it might not be possible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very contrary qualities, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young, even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another defect attending the grace of those I am speaking, is its being mingled with so much corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different things that are before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear sky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference. When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an assured hope.

*Secondly*, There is in such a case a defect in the *eye*. As the feebleness of grace and prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the sight; it darkens the sight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace is one. Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colours from those which properly belong to them, and like many other distempers, that put the mouth out of taste, so as to disenable from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but every thing tastes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but poor plight for judging and distinguishing spiritual things.

For these reasons, no signs that can be given, will actually satisfy persons in such a case: let the signs that are given, be never

never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a man rules, how to distinguish visible objects in the dark; the things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labour, in poring on past experiences, and examining themselves by signs they hear laid down from the pulpit, or that they read in books; when there is other work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their self-examinations are like to be in vain, if they should spend never so much time in them. The accursed thing is to be destroyed from their camp, and Achan to be slain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain assurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it. And although self-examination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal means, by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by *self-examination*, as by *action*. The apostle Paul sought assurance chiefly this way, even by *forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained assurance, 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.* He obtained assurance of winning the prize, more by *running*, than by *considering*. The *swiftness of his pace*, did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the *strictness of his examination*. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to faith, virtue, &c. is the direction that the apostle Peter gives us, for *making our calling and election sure*, and having *an entrance ministred to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting kingdom*; signifying to us, that without this, our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark, that cannot plainly see things past or to come, either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is future, and *far off*, 2 Pet. i. 5.—11. ‡

Therefore,

‡ "The way to know your godliness, is to renew the visible exercises of grace".—"The more the visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed,

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits may be very useful to them to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or as supposing they should be the principal means of their satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, in the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in a false confidence, and high conceit of their own supposed great experiences and privileges. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great self-righteousness, (but very subtil and secret, under the disguise of great humility), and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit, of their great exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all, to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrisy. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this sort of persons seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction and repentance. But yet the laying down good rules may be a means of preventing such hypocrites, and of convincing many of other kinds of hypocrites: and God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. And besides, such rules may be of use to the true saints, to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true; and be a means of their religion's becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious affections are distinguished from false.

" renewed, the more abiding and " confirmed your assurance will be." —" The more mens grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. *Grace and peace be* " *multiplied unto you, through the* " *knowledge of God and Jesus Christ* " *our Lord.*" *Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrisy*, p. 139. and 142.

I. Affections that are truly ſpiritual and gracious, do ariſe from thoſe influences and operations on the heart, which are *ſpiritual*, *ſupernatural*, and *divine*.

I will explain what I mean by theſe terms, whence will appear their uſe to diſtinguiſh between thoſe affections which are ſpiritual, and thoſe which are not ſo.

We find that true ſaints, or thoſe perſons who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New Teſtament called *ſpiritual* perſons. And their being *ſpiritual* is ſpoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who are not ſanctified. This is evident, becauſe thoſe who are ſpiritual are ſet in oppoſition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the ſpiritual man and the natural man are ſet in oppoſition one to another, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 15. *The* natural man *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is* ſpiritual, *judgeth all things.* The ſcripture explains itſelf to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace, by a natural man: thus the apoſtle Jude, ſpeaking of certain *ungodly men*, that had crept in unawares among the ſaints, ver. 4. of his epiſtle, ſays, ver. 19. *Theſe are* ſenſual, *having not the Spirit.* This the apoſtle gives as a reaſon why they behaved themſelves in ſuch a wicked manner as he had deſcribed. Here the word tranſlated *ſenſual*, in the original is ψυχικοὶ; which is the very ſame, which in thoſe verſes in 1 Cor. chap. ii. is tranſlated *natural.* In the like manner, in the continuation of the ſame diſcourſe, in the next verſe but one, *ſpiritual men* are oppoſed to *carnal men*; which the connection plainly ſhews mean the ſame, as *ſpiritual men* and *natural men*, in the foregoing verſes; *And I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you, as unto* ſpiritual, *but as unto* carnal; *i. e.* as in a great meaſure unſanctified. That by *carnal* the apoſtle means corrupt and unſanctified, is abundantly evident, by Rom. vii. 25. and viii. 1. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 12. 13. Gal. v. 16. to the end. Col. ii. 18. Now therefore, if by natural and carnal, in theſe texts, he intended *unſanctified*, then doubtleſs by ſpiritual, which is oppoſed thereto, is meant *ſanctified* and gracious.

And as the ſaints are called ſpiritual in ſcripture, ſo we alſo find that there are certain properties, qualities, and principles, that have the ſame epithet given them. So we read of a *ſpiritual mind*, Rom. viii. 6. 7. and of *ſpiritual wiſdom*, Col. i. 9. and of *ſpiritual bleſſings*, Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be obſerved, that the epithet *ſpiritual*, in theſe and other parallel texts of the New Teſtament, is not uſed to ſignify

ſignify any relation of perſons or things to the ſpirit or ſoul of man, as the ſpiritual part of man, in oppoſition to the body, which is the material part. Qualities are not ſaid to be ſpiritual, becauſe they have their ſeat in the ſoul, and not in the body: for there are ſome properties that the ſcripture calls *carnal* or *fleſhly*, which have their ſeat as much in the ſoul, as thoſe properties that are called *ſpiritual*. Thus it is with pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and a man's truſting to his own wiſdom, which the apoſtle calls *fleſhly*, Col. ii. 18. Nor are things called ſpiritual, becauſe they are converſant about thoſe things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For ſo was the wiſdom of the wiſe men, and princes of this world, converſant about ſpirits, and immaterial beings; which yet the apoſtle ſpeaks of as *natural men*, totally ignorant of thoſe things that are *ſpiritual*, 1 Cor. chap. ii. But it is with relation to the *Holy Ghoſt*, or *Spirit of God*, that perſons or things are termed ſpiritual, in the New Teſtament. *Spirit*, as the word is uſed to ſignify the third perſon in the Trinity, is the ſubſtantive, of which is formed the adjective *ſpiritual*, in the holy ſcriptures. Thus Chriſtians are called ſpiritual perſons, becauſe they are born of the Spirit, and becauſe of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them. And things are called ſpiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Cor. ii. 13. 14. *Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* Here the apoſtle himſelf expreſsly ſignifies, that by *ſpiritual things*, he means *the things of the Spirit of God*, and *things which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*. The ſame is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole context. Again, Rom. viii. 6. *To be* carnally minded, *is death; but to be* ſpiritually minded, *is life and peace*. The apoſtle explains what he means by being carnally and ſpiritually minded, in what follows in the 9th verſe, and ſhews that by being ſpiritually minded, he means a having the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in the heart. *But ye are not* in the fleſh, *but* in the Spirit, *if ſo be* the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man* have not the Spirit of Chriſt, *he is none of his*. The ſame is evident by all the context. But time would fail to produce all the evidence there is of this, in the New Teſtament.

And it muſt be here obſerved, that although it is with relation to the Spirit of God and his influences, that perſons and things are called ſpiritual; yet not all thoſe perſons who are ſubject to any kind of influence of the Spirit of God, are ordi-

narily called ſpiritual in the New Teſtament. They who have only the common influences of God's Spirit, are not ſo called, in the places cited above, but only thoſe, who have the ſpecial, gracious and ſaving influences of God's Spirit: as is evident, becauſe it has been already proved, that by ſpiritual men is meant godly men, in oppoſition to natural, carnal and unſanctified men. And it is moſt plain, that the apoſtle by *ſpiritually minded*, Rom. viii. 6. means graciouſly minded. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which natural men might have, are ſometimes called ſpiritual, becauſe they are from the Spirit; yet natural men, whatever gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the uſual language of the New Teſtament, called ſpiritual perſons. For it was not by mens having the gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the virtues of the Spirit, that they were called ſpiritual; as is apparent, by Gal. vi. 1. *Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs.* Meekneſs is one of thoſe virtues which the apoſtle had juſt ſpoken of, in the verſes next preceding, ſhewing what are the *fruits of the Spirit*. Thoſe qualifications are ſaid to be ſpiritual in the language of the New Teſtament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the ſaints.

Thus when we read of ſpiritual wiſdom and underſtanding, (as in Col. i. 9. *We deſire that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will*, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding); hereby is intended that wiſdom which is gracious, and from the ſanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtleſs, by *ſpiritual wiſdom*, is meant that which is oppoſite to what the ſcripture calls *natural wiſdom*; as the *ſpiritual man* is oppoſed to the *natural man*. And therefore ſpiritual wiſdom is doubtleſs the ſame with that wiſdom which is from above, that the apoſtle James ſpeaks of, Jam. iii. 17. *The wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle*, &c. for this the apoſtle oppoſes to natural wiſdom, ver. 15. *This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual*—the laſt word in the original is the ſame that is tranſlated *natural*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural men may be the ſubjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many ſcriptures, as Numb. xxiv. 2. 1 Sam. x. 10. and xi. 6. and xvi. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. and many others; yet they are not in the ſenſe of the ſcripture, ſpiritual perſons; neither are any of thoſe effects, common gifts, qualities or affections, that are from the influence of the Spirit of God upon them,

them, called ſpiritual things. The great difference lies in theſe two things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true ſaints to dwell in them, as his proper laſting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine ſupernatural ſpring of life and action. The ſcriptures repreſent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occaſionally influencing the ſaints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlaſting dwelling-place, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John xiv. 16. 17. And he is repreſented as being there ſo united to the faculties of the ſoul, that he becomes there a principle or ſpring of new nature and life.

So the ſaints are ſaid to live by Chriſt living in them, Gal. ii. 20. Chriſt by his Spirit not only *is* in them, but *lives* in them; and ſo that they live by his life; ſo is his Spirit united to them, as a principle of life in them; they do not only drink living water, but this *living water becomes a well* or *fountain of water*, in the ſoul, *ſpringing up into* ſpiritual and *everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. and thus becomes a principle of life in them: this living water, this evangeliſt himſelf explains to intend the Spirit of God, Chap. vii. 38. 39. The light of the Sun of righteouſneſs does not only ſhine upon them, but is ſo communicated to them that they ſhine alſo, and become little images of that Sun which ſhines upon them; the ſap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the ſap of a tree may be conveyed into a veſſel, but is conveyed as ſap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a principle of life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the ſaints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *ſpiritual*.

On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men; yet becauſe it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character from it; for there being no union it is not their own. The light may ſhine upon a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the ſubject of the light, yet, becauſe the light becomes no principle of light in it, ſo as to cauſe the body to ſhine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it, ſo as to be called a *lightſome body*. So the Spirit of God acting upon the ſoul only, without communicating itſelf to be an active principle in it, cannot denominate it *ſpiritual*. A body that continues black, may be ſaid *not to have light*, though the light ſhines upon

upon it: so natural men are said *not to have the Spirit*, Jude 19. *sensual* or *natural*, (as the word is elsewhere rendered), *having not the Spirit*.

2. Another reason why the saints and their virtues are called spiritual, (which is the principal thing), is, that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital principle in their souls, there produces those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own *proper nature*. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in scripture the *Holy Ghost*. Holiness, which is as it were the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature, is as much the proper nature of the Holy Spirit, as heat is the nature of fire, or sweetness was the nature of that holy anointing oil, which was the principal type of the Holy Ghost in the Mosaic dispensation; yea, I may rather say, that holiness is as much the proper nature of the Holy Ghost, as sweetness was the nature of the sweet odour of that ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, that he there, as a seed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature, making the soul a partaker of God's beauty and Christ's joy, so that the saint has truly fellowship *with* the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation *of* the Holy Ghost. The grace which is in the hearts of the saints, is of the same nature with the divine holiness, as much as it is possible for that holiness to be, which is infinitely less in degree; as the brightness that is in a diamond which the sun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Christ says, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*; *i. e.* the grace that is begotten in the hearts of the saints, is something of the same nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a *spiritual nature*; after the same manner as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, or that which is born of corrupt nature is corrupt nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the minds of natural men after this manner. Though he may influence them many ways, yet he never, in any of his influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his nature, either on the minds of saints or sinners: but the Spirit of God may act upon men agreeably to his own nature, and not exert his proper nature in the acts and exercises of their minds: the Spirit of God may act so, that his actions may be agreeable to his nature, and yet may not at all communicate himself in his proper nature, in the effect of that

that action. Thus, for instance, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his nature in that action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that action, there was nothing of the proper nature of the Holy Spirit in that motion of the waters. And so he may act upon the minds of men many ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate things.

Thus not only the manner of the *relation* of the Spirit, who is the *operator*, to the subject of his operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding principle of action, whereas he doth not so operate upon sinners; but the influence and *operation itself* is different, and the *effect wrought* exceeding different. So that not only the persons are called *spiritual*, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those qualifications, affections, and experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also *spiritual*, and therein differ vastly in their nature and kind from all that a natural man is or can be the subject of, while he remains in a natural state; and also from all that men or devils can be the authors of. It is a spiritual work in this high sense; and therefore above all other works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God doth so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in scripture by the saints *being made partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. and *having God dwelling in them, and they in God*, 1 John iv. 12. 15. 16. and chap. iii. 21. *and having Christ in them*, John xvii. 21. Rom. viii. 10. *being the temples of the living God*, 2 Cor. vi. 16. *living by Christ's life*, Gal. ii. 20. *being made partakers of God's holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. *having Christ's love dwelling in them*, John xvii. 26. *having his joy fulfilled in them*, John xvii. 13. *seeing light in God's light*, and *being made to drink of the river of God's pleasures*, Psal. xxxvi. 8. 9. *having fellowship with God*, or *communicating and partaking with him*, (as the word signifies), 1 John i. 3. Not that the saints are made partakers of the essence of God, and so are *godded* with God, and *christed* with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics; but, to use the scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's *fulness*, Eph. iii. 17. 18. 19. John i. 16. that is, of God's spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word *fulness* signifies in scripture-language. Grace in the hearts of the saints, being therefore the most

moſt glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodneſs of his nature, it is doubtleſs his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner, above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being thoſe wherein God does, in ſo high a manner, communicate himſelf, and make the creature partaker of the divine nature, (the Spirit of God communicating itſelf in its own proper nature); this is what I mean by thoſe influences that are *divine*, when I ſay that *truly gracious affections do ariſe from thoſe influences that are ſpiritual and divine.*

The true ſaints only have that which is ſpiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the ſenſe that has been ſpoken of. They not only have not theſe communications of the Spirit of God in ſo high a *degree* as the ſaints, but have nothing of that *nature* or *kind.* For the apoſtle James tells us, that *natural* men *have not the Spirit;* and Chriſt teaches the neceſſity of a new birth, or a being born of the Spirit, from this, that *he that is born of the fleſh, has* only *fleſh*, and no *ſpirit*, John iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any degree; for the apoſtle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are ſome of his, Rom. viii. 9.—11. And an having the Spirit of God is ſpoken of as a certain ſign that perſons ſhall have the eternal inheritance; for it is ſpoken of as the earneſt of it, 2 Cor. i. 22 and v. 5. Eph. i. 14.: and an having any thing *of the Spirit* is mentioned as a ſure ſign of being in Chriſt, 1 John iv. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us* of *his Spirit.* Ungodly men, not only have not ſo much of the divine nature as the ſaints, but they are not *partakers of it;* which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being *partaker* of the divine nature is ſpoken of as the peculiar privilege of the true ſaints, 2 Pet. i. 4. Ungodly men are not *partakers of God's holineſs*, Heb. xii. 10. A natural man has no experience of any of thoſe things that are ſpiritual: the apoſtle teaches us that he is ſo far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect ſtranger to them, the talk about ſuch things is all fooliſhneſs and nonſenſe to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs to him: neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* And to the like purpoſe Chriſt teaches us that the world is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John xiv. 17. *Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him.* And it is further evident, that natural men have

have nothing in them of the same nature with the true grace of the saints, because the apostle teaches us, that those of them who go farthest in religion, have *no charity*, or true Christian love, 1 Cor. chap. xiii. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high pretenders to religion, that they *had not the love of God in them*, John v. 42. Hence natural men have no communion or fellowship with Christ, or participation with him, (as these words signify), for this is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the saints, 1 John i. 3. together with ver. 6. 7. and 1 Cor. i. 8. 9. And the scripture speaks of the actual being of a gracious principle in the soul, though in its first beginning, as a seed there planted, as inconsistent with a man's being a sinner, 1 John iii. 9. And natural men are represented in scripture, as having no spiritual light, no spiritual life, and no spiritual being; and therefore conversion is often compared to opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, and a work of creation, (wherein creatures are made entirely new), and becoming new-born children.

From these things it is evident, that those gracious influences which the saints are the subjects of, and the effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, altogether of a different kind from any thing that men find within themselves by nature, or only in the exercise of natural principles; and are things which no improvement of those qualifications, or principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher degrees, and no kind of composition of them, will ever bring men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every thing that natural men experience, in degree and circumstances, but also in kind; and are of a nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean by *supernatural*, when I say, that *gracious affections are from those influences that are supernatural.*

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward *perception* or *sensation* of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from any thing that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any thing of the like kind; I say, if God produces something thus new in a mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing; then

doubtleſs ſomething entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the ſame thing, there is ſome new ſenſation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new ſort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of that kind of perceptions or ſenſations which the mind had before; or there is what ſome metaphyſicians call a new *ſimple idea*. If grace be, in the ſenſe above deſcribed, an entirely new kind of principle; then the exerciſes of it are alſo entirely a new kind of exerciſes. And if there be in the ſoul a new ſort of exerciſes which it is conſcious of, which the ſoul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, compoſition, or management of what it was before conſcious or ſenſible of, could produce, or any thing like it; then it follows, that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or ſenſation: and here is, as it were, a new *ſpiritual ſenſe* that the mind has, or a principle of new kind of perception or ſpiritual ſenſation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of ſenſation of the mind, as taſting is diverſe from any of the other ſenſes; and ſomething is perceived by a true ſaint, in the exerciſe of this new ſenſe of mind, in ſpiritual and divine things, as entirely diverſe from any thing that is perceived in them, by natural men, as the ſweet taſte of honey is diverſe from the ideas men get of honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the ſpiritual perceptions which a ſanctified and ſpiritual perſon has, are not only diverſe from all that natural men have, after the manner that the ideas or perceptions of the ſame ſenſe may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and ſenſations of different ſenſes do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in ſcripture compared to the giving a new ſenſe, giving eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, unſtopping the ears of the deaf, and opening the eyes of them that were born blind, and turning from darkneſs unto light. And becauſe this ſpiritual ſenſe is immenſely the moſt noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties are uſeleſs and vain; therefore the giving this new ſenſe, with the bleſſed fruits and effects of it in the ſoul, is compared to a raiſing the dead, and to a new creation.

This new ſpiritual ſenſe, and the new diſpoſitions that attend it, are no new *faculties*, but are new *principles* of nature. I uſe the word *principles*, for want of a word of a more determinate ſignification. By a *principle of nature* in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exerciſe of the faculties

culties of the soul; or a natural habit, or foundation for action, giving a person ability and disposition to exert the faculties in exercises of such a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises, may be said to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So that new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense, is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon *natural principles;* but gives no new *spiritual principle.* Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle, *viz.* the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gives no new sense; neither is there any thing supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the senses, either voices, or shapes and colours, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and senses. So if God reveals to any natural man, any secret fact; as for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by sight and hearing. So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of sinners, he only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may assist mens natural ingeniosity, as he assisted Bezaleel and Aholiab in the curious works of the tabernacle: so he may assist mens natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage, and other natural qualifications; as he is said to have put his spirit on the seventy elders, and on Saul, so as to *give him another heart:* so God may greatly assist natural mens reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and notions of things of religion in many respects, without giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only assists conscience, which is a natural principle, to do

that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Conſcience naturally gives men an apprehenſion of right and wrong, and ſuggeſts the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution: the Spirit of God aſſiſts mens conſciences to do this in a greater degree, helps conſcience againſt the ſtupifying influence of worldly objects and their luſts. And ſo there are many other ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, aſſiſts and moves natural principles; but after all, it is no more than nature moved, acted, and improved; here is nothing ſupernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his ſpiritual influences on the hearts of his ſaints, operates by infuſing or exerciſing new, divine and ſupernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new and ſpiritual nature, and principles vaſtly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been ſaid it follows, that all ſpiritual and gracious affections are attended with, and do ariſe from ſome apprehenſion, idea, or ſenſation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea exceeding different from all that is or can be in the mind of a natural man; and which the natural man diſcerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of, (agreeable to 1 Cor. ii. 14.) and conceives of no more than a man without the ſenſe of taſting can conceive of the ſweet taſte of honey, or a man without the ſenſe of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune, or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.

But here two things muſt be obſerved, in order to the right underſtanding of this.

1. On the one hand it muſt be obſerved, that not every thing which in any reſpect appertains to ſpiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men can conceive of, and do experience; ſome things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumſtances, appendages, and effects are common. Thus a ſaint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation: love to God makes a man have deſires of the honour of God, and a deſire to pleaſe him; ſo does a natural man's love to his friend make him deſire his honour, and deſire to pleaſe him: love to God cauſes a man to delight in the thoughts of God, and to delight in the preſence of God, and to deſire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of God; and ſo it is with a man's love to his friend: and many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that idea which the ſaint has of the loveline ſs of

of God, and that ſenſation, and that kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quinteſſence of his love, is peculiar, and entirely diverſe from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in thoſe things that ſeem to be common, there is ſomething peculiar: both ſpiritual love and natural, cauſe deſires after the object beloved; but they be not the ſame ſort of deſires; there is a ſenſation of ſoul in the ſpiritual deſires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural deſires: both ſpiritual love and natural love are attended with delight in the object beloved; but the ſenſations of delight are not the ſame, but entirely and exceedingly diverſe. Natural men may have conceptions of many things *about* ſpiritual affections; but there is ſomething in them which is as it were the *nucleus*, or kernel of them, that they have no more conceptions of, than one born blind has of colours.

It may be clearly illuſtrated by this: we will ſuppoſe two men; one is born without the ſenſe of taſting, the other has it; the latter loves honey, and is greatly delighted in it, becauſe he knows the ſweet taſte of it; the other loves certain ſounds and colours: the love of each has many things that appertain to it, which is common; it cauſes both to deſire and delight in the object beloved, and cauſes grief when it is abſent, *&c.*—: but yet that idea or ſenſation which he who knows the taſte of honey, has of its excellency and ſweetneſs, that is the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have; and that delight which he has in honey, is wholly diverſe from any thing that the other can conceive of; though they both delight in their beloved objects. So both theſe perſons may in ſome reſpects love the ſame object: the one may love a delicious kind of fruit, which is beautiful to the eye, and of a delicious taſte; not only becauſe he has ſeen its pleaſant colours, but knows its ſweet taſte; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful colours: there are many things ſeem, in ſome reſpect, to be common to both; both love, both deſire, and both delight; but the love, and deſire, and delight of the one, is altogether diverſe from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural man and ſpiritual man is like to this; but only it muſt be obſerved, that in one reſpect it is vaſtly greater, *viz.* that the kinds of excellency which are perceived in ſpiritual objects, by theſe different kinds of perſons, are in themſelves vaſtly more diverſe than the different kinds of excellency perceived in delicious fruit, by a *taſting* and a *taſteleſs* man; and in another reſpect it may

may not be so great, *viz.* as the spiritual man may have a spiritual sense or taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellency, but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed, that a natural man may have those religious apprehensions and affections, which may be in many respects very new and surprising to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet what he experiences be nothing like the exercises of a principle of new nature, or the sensations of a new spiritual sense: his affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural principles, in a very new degree, and with a great many new circumstances, and a new co-operation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas; this may be from some extraordinary powerful influence of Satan, and some great delusion; but there is nothing but nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor man, that had always dwelt in a cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should in a jest, be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and there arrayed in princely robes, and set in the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him, and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch; the ideas he would have, and the affections he would experience, would in many respects be very new, and such as he had no imagination of before; but all is no more, than only extraordinarily raising and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying, and compounding such sort of ideas, as he has by nature; here is nothing like giving him a new sense.

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections do arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that *sensible effect* or *sensation* in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that is possible a natural man should experience, not only different in degree and circumstances, but different in its whole nature: so that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceeding diverse, and immensely below it, in its kind; and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any thing of the same nature.

I have insisted largely on this matter, because it is of great importance and use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the delusions of Satan, in many kinds of false religious affections, which multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; and to settle and determine many

many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.

Now therefore, to apply these things to the purpose of this discourse.

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have made on their imagination, or the imaginary ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any part of gracious experience.

Here, for the sake of the common people, I will explain what is intended by *impressions on the imagination*, and *imaginary ideas*. The imagination is that power of the mind, whereby it can have a conception, or idea of things of an external or outward nature, (that is, of such sort of things as are the objects of the outward senses), when those things are not present, and be not perceived by the senses. It is called imagination from the word *image*; because thereby a person can have an image of some external thing in his mind, when that thing is not present in reality, nor any thing like it. All such kind of things as we perceive by our five external senses, *seeing*, *hearing*, *smelling*, *tasting*, and *feeling*, are external things: and when a person has an idea, or image of any of these sorts of things in his mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an *imagination* of them, and these ideas are *imaginary ideas*: and when such kind of ideas are strongly impressed upon the mind, and the image of them in the mind is very lively, almost as if one saw them, or heard them, &c. that is called an *impression on the imagination*. Thus colours, and shapes, and a form of countenance, they are outward things; because they are that sort of things which are the objects of the outward sense of seeing: and therefore when any person has in his mind a lively idea of any shape, or colour, or form of countenance; that is to have an imagination of those things. So if he has an idea, of such sort of light or darkness, as he perceives by the sense of seeing; that is to have an idea of outward light, and so is an imagination. So if he has an idea of any marks made on paper, suppose letters and words written in a book; that is to have an external and imaginary idea of such kind of things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily eyes. And when we have the ideas of that kind of things which we perceive

perceive by any of the other senses, as of any sounds or voices, or words spoken; this is only to have ideas of outward things, *viz.* of such kind of things as are perceived by the external sense of hearing, and so that also is imagination: and when these ideas are livelily impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the ears, this is to have an impression on the imagination. And so I might go on, and instance in the ideas of things appertaining to the other three senses of *smelling*, *tasting*, and *feeling*.

Many who have had such things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the nature of spiritual discoveries. They have had lively ideas of some external shape, and beautiful form of countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them ideas of a great outward light; and this they call a spiritual discovery of God's or Christ's glory. Some have had ideas of Christ's hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; and this they call a spiritual sight of Christ crucified, and the way of salvation by his blood. Some have seen him with his arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a discovery of the sufficiency of Christ's grace and love. Some have had lively ideas of heaven, and of Christ on his throne there, and shining ranks of saints and angels; and this they call seeing heaven opened to them. Some from time to time have had a lively idea of a person of a beautiful countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual discovery of the love of Christ to their souls, and tasting the love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient evidence that these things are spiritual discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these things with their bodily eyes, but in their hearts; for they can see them when their eyes are shut. And in like manner, the imaginations of some have been impressed with ideas of the sense of hearing; they have had ideas of words, as if they were spoke to them, sometimes they are the words of scripture, and sometimes other words: they have had ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable words to them. These things they have called having the inward call of Christ, hearing the voice of Christ spiritually in their hearts, having the witness of the Spirit, and the inward testimony of the love of Christ, *&c.*—

The common, and less considerate and understanding sort of people, are the more easily led into apprehensions that these things are spiritual things, because spiritual things being invisible, and not things that can be pointed forth with the finger,

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we are forced to use figurative expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow names from external and sensible objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of *light*; and an having such an apprehension of such or such things, by the name of *seeing* such things; and the conviction of the judgement, and the persuasion of the will, by the word of Christ in the gospel, we signify by *spiritually hearing the call of Christ*: and the scripture itself abounds with such like figurative expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the necessity of having their eyes opened, and having a discovery of spiritual things, and seeing Christ in his glory, and having the inward call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external discoveries, and imaginary views as have been spoken of; and when they have them, are confident that now their eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their deliverance and happiness, and many kinds of affections are at once set in a violent motion in them.

But it is exceeding apparent that such ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracions experiences are spiritual and divine. These external ideas are in no wise of such a sort, that they are entirely, and in their whole nature diverse from all that men have by nature, perfectly different from, and vastly above any sensation which it is possible a man should have by any natural sense or principle, so that in order to have them, a man must have a new spiritual and divine sense given him, in order to have any sensations of that sort: so far from this, that they are ideas of the same sort which we have by the external senses, that are some of the inferiour powers of the human nature; they are merely ideas of external objects, or ideas of that nature, of the same outward sensitive kind; the same sort of sensations of mind (differing not in degree, but only in circumstances) that we have by those natural principles which are common to us with the beasts, *viz.* the five external senses. This is a low, miserable notion of spiritual sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that sort of ideas which we have by our animal senses, which senses the beasts have in as great perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine nature in the soul, into a mere animal. There is nothing wanting in the soul, as it is by nature, to render it capable of being the subject of all these ex-

ternal ideas, without any new principles. A natural man is capable of having an idea, and a lively idea of ſhapes, and colours, and ſounds when they are abſent, and as capable as a regenerate man is: ſo there is nothing ſupernatural in them. And it is known by abundant experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human nature, which makes perſons more capable of having ſuch lively and ſtrong imaginary ideas, but that on the contrary, the weakneſs of body and mind, and diſtempers of body, makes perſons abundantly more ſuſceptive of ſuch impreſſions *.

As to a truly ſpiritual ſenſation, not only is the manner of its coming into the mind extraordinary, but the ſenſation itſelf is totally diverſe from all that men have, or can have, in a ſtate of nature, as has been ſhown. But as to theſe external ideas, though the way of their coming into the mind is ſometimes unuſual, yet the ideas in themſelves are not the better for that; they are ſtill of no different ſort from what men have by their ſenſes; they are of no higher kind, nor a whit better. For inſtance, the external idea a man has now of Chriſt hanging on the croſs, and ſhedding his blood, is no better in itſelf, than the external idea that the Jews his enemies had, who ſtood round his croſs, and ſaw this with their bodily eyes. The imaginary idea which men have now, of an external brightneſs and glory of God, is no better than the idea the wicked congregation in the wilderneſs had of the external glory of the Lord at mount Sinai, when they ſaw it with bodily eyes; or any better than that idea which millions of curſed reprobates will have of the external glory of Chriſt at the day of judgement, who ſhall ſee, and have a very lively idea of ten thouſand times greater external glory of Chriſt, than ever yet was conceived in any man's imagination †: yea, the image of Chriſt, which men

* "Conceits and whimſies abound "moſt in men of weak reaſon; chil- "dren, and ſuch as are cracked in "their underſtanding, have moſt of "them; ſtrength of reaſon baniſhes "them, as the ſun does miſts and va- "pours. But now the more rational "any gracious perſon is, by ſo much "more is he fixed and ſettled, and ſa- "tisfied in the grounds of religion: "yea, there is the higheſt and pureſt "reaſon in religion; and when "this change is wrought upon men, "it is carried on in a rational way, "1 Jn. i. 18. John xix. 9." *Flavel's Preparation for Sufferings*, Chap. vi.

† "If any man ſhould ſee, and be- "hold Chriſt really, immediately, "this is not the ſaving knowledge of "him. I know the ſaints do know "Chriſt as if immediately preſent; "they are not ſtrangers by their di- "ſtance: if others have ſeen him "more immediately, I will not diſ- "pute it. But if they have ſeen the "Lord Jeſus as immediately as if "here on earth, yet Capernaum ſaw "him ſo; nay ſome of them were "diſciples for a time, and followed "him, John vi. And yet the Lord "was hid from their eyes. Nay, all "the world ſhall ſee him in his glory, "which

men conceive in their imaginations, is not in its own nature, of any ſuperior kind to the idea the Papiſts conceive of Chriſt, by the beautiful and affecting images of him which they ſee in their churches; (though the way of their receiving the idea may not be ſo bad); nor are the affections they have, if built primarily on ſuch imaginations, any better than the affections raiſed in the ignorant people, by the ſight of thoſe images, which oftentimes are very great; eſpecially when theſe images, through the craft of the prieſts, are made to move, and ſpeak, and weep, and the like *. Merely the way of perſons receiving theſe imaginary ideas, do not alter the nature of the ideas themſelves that are received: let them be received in what way they will, they are ſtill but external ideas, or ideas of outward appearances, and ſo are not ſpiritual. Yea, if men ſhould actually receive ſuch external ideas by the immediate power of the moſt high God upon their minds, they would not be ſpiritual, they ſhould be no more than a common work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in fact, in the inſtance of Balaam, who had impreſſed on his mind, by God himſelf, a clear and lively outward repreſentation or idea of Jeſus Chriſt, as *the Star riſing out of Jacob*, when *he heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Moſt High, and ſaw the viſion of the Almighty, falling into a trance*, Numb. xxiv. 16. 17. but yet had no manner of ſpiritual diſcovery of Chriſt; that Day-ſtar never ſpiritually roſe in his heart, he being but a natural man.

And as theſe external ideas have nothing divine or ſpiritual in their nature, and nothing but what natural men, without any new principles, are capable of; ſo there is nothing in their nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled exerciſe of the glorious power of God, in order to their production, which it has been ſhown there is in the production of true grace. There appears to be nothing in their nature a-

" which ſhall amaze them; and yet " this is far ſhort of having the ſa- " ving knowledge of him, which the " Lord doth communicate to the e- " lect. So that though you ſee the " Lord ſo really, as that you become " familiar with him, yet Luke xiii. " 26. *Lord, have we not eat and drank,* " &c.—and ſo periſh." *Shepard's Par. of the ten virgins*, P. I. p. 197. 198.

* " Satan is transformed into an an- " gel of light: and hence we have heard " that ſome have heard voices; ſome " have ſeen the very blood of Chriſt " dropping on them, and his wounds " in his ſide; ſome have ſeen a great " light ſhining in the chamber; ſome " wonderfully affected with their " dreams; ſome in great diſtreſs have " had inward witneſs, *Thy ſins are for-* " *given;* and hence ſuch liberty and " joy, that they are ready to leap up " and down the chamber. O adulte- " rous generation! this is natural and " uſual with men, they would fain ſee " Jeſus, and have him preſent to give " them peace; and hence Papiſts have " his images.---Wo to them that have " no other manifeſted Chriſt, but ſuch " an one." *Shepard's Par. of the ten virgins*, P. I. p. 198.

bove the power of the devil. It is certainly not above the power of Satan to ſuggeſt thoughts to men; becauſe otherwiſe he could not tempt them to ſin. And if he can ſuggeſt any thoughts or ideas at all, doubtleſs imaginary ones, or ideas of things external are not above his power †; for the external ideas men have are the loweſt ſort of ideas. Theſe ideas may be raiſed only by impreſſions made on the body, by moving the animal ſpirits, and impreſſing the brain. Abundant experience does certainly ſhow, that alterations in the body will excite imaginary or external ideas in the mind; as often, in caſe of a high fever, melancholy, *&c.* Theſe external ideas are as much below the more intellectual exerciſes of the ſoul, as the body is a leſs noble part of man than the ſoul.

And there is not only nothing in the nature of theſe external ideas or imaginations of outward appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the power of the devil; but it is certain alſo that the devil can excite, and often hath excited ſuch ideas. They were external ideas which he excited in the dreams and viſions of the falſe prophets of old, who were under the influence of lying ſpirits, that we often read of in ſcripture, as Deut. xiii. 1. 1 Kings xxii. 22. Iſ. xxviii. 7. Ezek. xiii. 7. Zech. xiii. 4. And they were external ideas that he often excited in the minds of the heathen prieſts, magicians and ſorcerers in their viſions and eccſtaſies; and they were external ideas that he excited in the mind of the man Chriſt Jeſus, when he ſhewed him all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, when thoſe kingdoms were not really in ſight.

And if Satan, or any created being, has power to impreſs the mind with outward repreſentations, then no particular ſort of outward repreſentations can be any evidence of a divine power. Almighty power is no more requiſite to repreſent the ſhape of man to the imagination, than the ſhape of any thing elſe: there is no higher kind of power neceſſary to form in the brain one bodily ſhape or colour than another: it needs a no more glorious power to repreſent the form of the body of man, than the form of a chip or block; though it be of a very beautiful human body, with a ſweet ſmile in his countenance, or arms open, or blood running from hands, feet, and ſide: that ſort of power which can repreſent black or darkneſs to the

† "Conſider how difficult, yea and impoſſible it is to determine that ſuch a voice, viſion, or revelation is of God, and that Satan cannot feign or counterfeit it; ſeeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may diſtinguiſh one ſpirit from another." *Flavel's Cauſes and cures of mental errors*, Cauſe 14.

imagination,

imagination, can also represent white and shining brightness: the power and skill which can well and exactly paint a straw, or a stick of wood, on a piece of paper or canvas; the same in kind, only perhaps further improved, will be sufficient to paint the body of a man, with great beauty and in royal majesty, or a magnificent city, paved with gold, full of brightness, and a glorious throne, *&c.* So it is no more than the same sort of power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the brain. The same sort of power that can put ink upon paper, can put on leaf-gold. So that it is evident to a demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the devil's power to make any sort of external representation at all on the fancy, (as without doubt it is, and never any one questioned it who believed there was a devil, that had any agency with mankind); I say, if so, it is demonstrably evident, that a created power may extend to all kinds of external appearances and ideas in the mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no such things have any thing in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the sense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious experiences have. And though external ideas, through man's make and frame, do ordinarily in some degree attend spiritual experiences, yet these ideas are no part of their spiritual experience, any more than the motion of the blood, and beating of the pulse, that attends experiences, are a part of spiritual experience. And though undoubtedly, through mens infirmity in the present state, and especially through the weak constitution of some persons, gracious affections which are very strong, do excite lively ideas in the imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when persons affections are *founded on* imaginations, which is often the case, those affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those operations that are spiritual and divine.

These imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal affections of men to an exceeding great height *: and no wonder, when the

* There is a remarkable passage of Mr John Smith, in his discourse on the shortness of a Pharisaic righteousness, p. 370. 371. of his select discourses, describing that sort of religion which is built on such a foundation as I am here speaking of. I cannot forbear transcribing the whole of it. Speaking of a sort of Christians, whose life is nothing but a strong energy of fancy, he says, "Lest their religion might too grossly discover itself to be nothing else but a piece of art, there may be sometimes such extraordinary motions stirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that

the ſubjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting perſuaſion, that they are divine manifeſtations, which the great JEHOVAH immediately makes to their ſouls, therein giving them teſtimonies, in an extraordinary manner, of his high and peculiar favour.

Again, it is evident from what has been obſerved and proved of the manner in which gracious operations and effects in the heart are ſpiritual, ſupernatural and divine, that the immediate ſuggeſting of the words of ſcripture to the mind, has nothing in it which is ſpiritual.

I have had occaſion to ſay ſomething of this already; and what has been ſaid may be ſufficient to evince it: but if the reader bears in mind what has been ſaid concerning the nature of ſpiritual influences and effects, it will be more abundantly manifeſt that this is no ſpiritual effect. For I ſuppoſe there is no perſon of common underſtanding, who will ſay or imagine, that

that they may ſeem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing elſe but the energy of their own ſelf love, touched with ſome fleſhly apprehenſions of divine things, and excited by them. There are ſuch things in our Chriſtian religion, when a carnal, unhallowed mind takes the chair, and gets the expounding of them, may ſeem very delicious to the fleſhly appetites of men; ſome doctrines and notions of free grace and juſtification, the magnificent titles of ſons of God and heirs of heaven, ever-flowing ſtreams of joy and pleaſure that bleſſed ſouls ſhall ſwim in to all eternity, a glorious paradiſe in the world to come, always ſpringing up with well-ſcented and fragrant beauties, a new Jeruſalem paved with gold, and beſpangled with ſtars, comprehending in its vaſt circuit ſuch numberleſs varieties, that a buſy curioſity may ſpend itſelf about to all eternity. I doubt not but that ſometimes the moſt fleſhly and earthly men, that fly in their ambition to the pomp of this world, may be ſo raviſhed with the conceits of ſuch things as theſe, that they may ſeem to be made partakers of the powers of the world to come. I doubt not but that they might be much exalted with them, as the ſouls of crazed or diſtracted perſons ſeem to be ſometimes, when their fancies play with thoſe quick and nimble ſpirits, which a diſtempered frame of body, and unnatural heat in their heads, beget within them. Thus may theſe blazing comets riſe up above the moon, and climb higher than the ſun: which yet, becauſe they have no ſolid conſiſtence of their own, and are of a baſe and earthly alloy, will ſoon vaniſh and fall down again, being only borne up by an external force. They may ſeem to themſelves to have attained higher than thoſe noble Chriſtians, that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodneſs: they ſeem to be *pleniores Deo*, (*i. e.* more full of God) than thoſe that are really informed and actuated by the divine Spirit, and do move on ſteadily and conſtantly in the way towards heaven. As the ſeed that was ſown in ſtony ground, grew up, and lengthened out its blade faſter, than that which was ſown in the good and fruitful ſoil. And as the motions of our ſenſe, and fancy, and paſſions, while our ſouls are in this mortal condition, ſunk down deeply into the body, are many times more vigorous, and make ſtronger impreſſions upon us, than thoſe of the higher powers of the ſoul, which are more ſubtil, and remote from theſe mixt animal perceptions: that

devotion

that the bringing words (let them be what words they will) to the mind, is an effect of that nature which it is impossible the mind of a natural man, while he remains in a state of nature, should be the subject of, or any thing like it; or that it requires any new divine sense in the soul; or that the bringing sounds or letters to the mind, is an effect of so high, holy and excellent a nature, that it is impossible any created power should be the cause of it.

As the suggesting words of scripture to the mind, is only the exciting in the mind ideas of certain sounds or letters; so it is only one way of exciting ideas in the imagination; for sounds and letters are external things, that are the objects of the external senses of seeing and hearing. Ideas of certain marks upon paper, such as any of the twenty-four letters, in whatever order, or any sounds of the voice, are as much external ideas, as of any other shapes or sounds whatsoever: and therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any time the Spirit of God suggests these letters or sounds to the mind, this is a *common*, and not any *special* or *gracious* influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those affections which have this effect for their foundation, are no spiritual or gracious affections.—But let it be observed what it is that I say, *viz.* when this effect, even the immediate and extraordinary *manner of words of scripture's*

devotion which is there seated, may seem to have more energy and life in it, than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch, spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives itself through our wills and affections. But however the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent, spermatical, and thriving nature. For that proceeding indeed from nothing but a sensual and fleshly apprehension of God and true happiness, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and as the sensible powers and faculties grow more languid, or the sun of divine light shines more brightly upon us, these earthly devotions, like our culinary fires, will abate their heat and fervour. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished, because it is of an immortal nature; and being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner; as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and œconomy of the whole body under it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our jugglings in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature, informing the souls of men; it is a Godlike frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial, universal love to God and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrisy, whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform ourselves as much as may be to all that perfection which shines in him."

*coming*

*coming to the mind*, is that which excites the affections, and is properly the foundation of them, then these affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that persons may have gracious affections going with scriptures which come to their minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual sense, taste or relish they have of the divine and excellent things contained in those scriptures, that is the thing which excites their affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden manner of words being brought to their minds. They are affected with the instruction they receive from the words, and the view of the glorious things of God or Christ, and things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the words came suddenly, as though some person had spoke them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this foundation; the words of some great and high promises of scripture come suddenly to their minds, and they look upon the words as directed immediately by God to them, as though the words that moment proceeded out of the mouth of God as spoken to them: so that they take it as a voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy circumstances, and promising such and such great things to them: and this it is that affects and elevates them. There is no new spiritual understanding of the divine *things contained in the scripture*, or new spiritual sense of the glorious things taught in that part of the Bible, going before their affection, and being the foundation of it: all the new understanding they have, or think they have, to be the foundation of their affection, is this, that the words *are spoke to them*, because they come so suddenly and extraordinarily. And so this affection is built wholly on the sand; because it is built on a conclusion for which they have no foundation. For, as has been shown, the sudden coming of the words to their minds, is no evidence that the bringing them to their minds in that manner, was from God. And if it was true that God brought the words to their minds, and they certainly knew it, that would not be spiritual knowledge; it may be without any spiritual sense: Balaam might know that the words which God suggested to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual knowledge. So that these affections which are built on that notion, that texts of scripture are sent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual foundation, and are vain and delusive. Persons who have their affections thus raised, if they should be inquired of, whether they have any new

sense

ſenſe of the excellency of things contained in thoſe ſcriptures, would probably ſay, *Yes*, without heſitation: but it is true no otherwiſe than thus, that when they have taken up that notion, that the words are ſpoken immediately to them, that makes them ſeem ſweet to them, and they own the things which theſe ſcriptures ſay to them, for excellent things, and wonderful things. As for inſtance, ſuppoſing theſe were the words which were ſuddenly brought to their minds, *Fear not,——it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom*; they having confidently taken up a notion that the words were as it were immediately ſpoken from heaven to them, as an immediate revelation, that God was their father, and had given the kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the words ſeem ſweet to them; and oh, they ſay, *they are excellent things that are contained in thoſe words!* But the reaſon why the promiſe ſeems excellent to them, is only becauſe they think it is made to them immediately: all the ſenſe they have of any glory in them, is only from ſelf-love, and from their own imagined intereſt in the words: not that they had any view or ſenſe of the holy and glorious nature of the kingdom of heaven, and the ſpiritual glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent grace to ſinful men, in offering and giving them this kingdom, of his own good pleaſure, preceding their imagined intereſt in theſe things, and their being affected by them, and being the foundation of their affection, and hope of an intereſt in them. On the contrary, they firſt imagine they are intereſted, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own theſe things to be excellent. So that the ſudden and extraordinary way of the ſcripture's coming to their mind, is plainly the firſt foundation of the whole; which is a clear evidence of the wretched deluſion they are under.

The firſt comfort of many perſons, and what they call their converſion, is after this manner: after awakening and terrors, ſome comfortable ſweet promiſe comes ſuddenly and wonderfully to their minds; and the manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God *to them*: and this is the very thing that is all the foundation of their faith, and hope, and comfort: from hence they take their firſt encouragement to truſt in God and in Chriſt, becauſe they think that God, by ſome ſcripture ſo brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promiſed them eternal life; which is very abſurd; for every one of common knowledge or the principles of religion, knows that it is God's manner to reveal his love to men, and their intereſt in the promiſes, after

they have believed, and not before; becauſe they muſt firſt believe, before they have any intereſt in the promiſes to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth, and not of lies: he does not bring ſcriptures to mens minds, to reveal to them that they have an intereſt in God's favour and promiſes, when they have none, having not yet believed: which would be the caſe, if God's bringing texts of ſcripture to mens minds, to reveal to them that their ſins were forgiven, or that it was God's pleaſure to give them the kingdom, or any thing of that nature, went before, and was the foundation of their firſt faith. There is no promiſe of the covenant of grace belongs to any man, until he has firſt believed in Chriſt; for it is by faith alone that we become intereſted in Chriſt, and the promiſes of the new covenant made in him: and therefore whatever ſpirit applies the promiſes of that covenant to a perſon who has not firſt believed, as being already his, muſt be a lying ſpirit; and that faith which is firſt built on ſuch an application of promiſes, is built upon a lie. God's manner is not to bring comfortable texts of ſcripture to give men *aſſurance* of his love, and that they ſhall be happy, before they have had a faith of *dependence* †. And if the ſcripture which comes to a perſon's mind, be not ſo properly a promiſe, as an invitation; yet if he makes the ſudden or unuſual manner of the invitation's coming to his mind, the ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not

† Mr Stoddard, in his *Guide to Chriſt*, p. 8. ſays, that "ſometimes men, after they have been in trouble a while, have ſome promiſes come to them, with a great deal of refreſhing; and they hope God has accepted them:" And ſays, that "In this caſe, the miniſter may tell them, that God never gives a faith of aſſurance, before he gives a faith of dependence; for he never manifeſts his love, until men are in a ſtate of favour and reconciliation, which is by faith of dependence. When men have comfortable ſcriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as tokens of God's love; but men muſt be brought into Chriſt, by accepting the offer of the goſpel, before they are fit for ſuch manifeſtations. God's method is, firſt to make the ſoul accept of the offers of grace, and then to manifeſt his good eſtate unto him." And p. 76. ſpeaking of them "that ſeem to be brought to lie at God's foot, and give an account of their cloſing with Chriſt, and that God has revealed Chriſt to them, and drawn their hearts to him, and that they do accept of Chriſt," he ſays, "In this caſe, it is beſt to examine whether by that light that was given him, he ſaw Chriſt and ſalvation offered to him, or whether he ſaw that God loved him, or pardoned him: for the offer of grace and our acceptance goes before pardon, and therefore, much more, before the knowledge of it."

Mr Shepard, in his *Parable of the ten virgins*, Part II. p. 15. ſays, that "Grace and the love of Chriſt (the faireſt colours under the ſun) may be pretended; but if you ſhall receive, under this appearance, that God witneſſeth his love, firſt by an abſolute promiſe, take heed there; for under this appearance you may as well bring in

not true faith; becauſe it is built on that which is not the true ground of faith. True faith is built on no precarious foundation: but a determination that the words of ſuch a particular text, were, by the immediate power of God, ſuggeſted to the mind, at ſuch a time, as though then ſpoken and directed by God to him, becauſe the words came after ſuch a manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious determination, as has been now ſhown; and therefore is a falſe and ſandy foundation for faith; and accordingly that faith which is built upon it is falſe. The only certain foundation which any perſon has to believe that he is invited to partake of the bleſſings of the goſpel, is, that the word of God declares that perſons ſo qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it, is true and cannot lie. If a ſinner be once convinced of the veracity of God, and that the ſcriptures are his word, he will need no more to convince and ſatisfy him that he is invited; for the ſcriptures are full of invitations to ſinners, to the chief of ſinners, to come and partake of the benefits of the goſpel: he will not want any new ſpeaking of God to him, what he hath ſpoken already will be enough with him.

As the firſt comfort of many perſons, and their affections at the time of their ſuppoſed converſion, are built on ſuch grounds as theſe which have been mentioned; ſo are their joys and hopes, and other affections, from time to time afterwards. They have often particular words of ſcripture, ſweet declarations and promiſes ſuggeſted to them, which by reaſon of the manner of their coming, they think are *immediately* ſent from God to them, *at that time*; which they look upon as their warrant to take them; and which they actually make the main ground of their appropriating them to themſelves, and of the comfort they take in them, and the confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of converſation is car-

in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forſake the ſcriptures."

And in Part I. p. 86. he ſays "Is Chriſt yours? Yes, I ſee it. How? By any word or promiſe! No: this is deluſion." And p. 136. ſpeaking of them that have no ſolid ground of peace, he reckons, "Thoſe that content themſelves with the revelation of the Lord's love, without the ſight of any work, or not looking to it." And ſays preſently after, "The teſtimony of the Spirit does not make a man more a Chriſtian, but only evidenceth it; as it is the nature of a witneſs, not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it." And p. 140. ſpeaking of them that ſay they have the witneſs of the Spirit, that makes a difference between them and hypocrites, he ſays, "The witneſs of the Spirit makes not the firſt difference: for firſt a man is a believer, and in Chriſt, and juſtified, called, and ſanctified, before the Spirit does witneſs it; elſe the Spirit ſhould witneſs to an untruth and lie."

ried on between God and them; and that God, from time to time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their doubts, and testifies his love to them, and promises them supports and supplies, and his blessing in such and such cases, and reveals to them clearly their interest in eternal blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a course of a sudden and tumultuous kind of joys, mingled with a strong confidence, and high opinion of themselves; when indeed the main ground of these joys, and this confidence, is not any thing *contained in*, or *taught by* these scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the *manner of their coming to them;* which is a certain evidence of their delusion. There is no particular promise in the word of God that is the saint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the promises of the covenant of grace are his, and are made to him, and spoken to him †: though it be true that some of these promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his case than others; and God by his Spirit may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater sense of the preciousness, and glory, and suitableness of the blessings contained in them.

But here some may be ready to say, What, is there no such thing as any particular spiritual application of the promises of scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing as a spiritual and saving application of the invitations and promises of scripture to the souls of men: but it is also certain, that the nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many persons, to the great ensnaring of their own souls, and the giving Satan a vast advantage against them, and against the interest of religion, and the church of God. The spiritual application of a scripture promise does not consist in its being immediately suggested to the thoughts by some extrinsic agent, and being borne into the mind with this strong apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and directed to them at that time: there is nothing of the evidence of the hand of God in this ef-

† Mr Shepard, in his *Sound Believer*, p. 159. of the late impression at Boston, says, "Embrace in thy bosom, not only some few promises, but all." And then he asks the question, "When may a Christian take a promise without presumption, as spoken to him?" He answers, "The rule is very sweet, but certain; when he takes all the scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament, when he sets all the commands before him, as a compass and guide to walk after, when he applies all the threatenings to drive him nearer unto Christ the end of them. This no hypocrite can do; this the saints shall do; and by this they may know when the Lord speaks in particular unto them."

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fect, as events have proved, in many notorious inſtances; and it is a mean notion of a ſpiritual application of ſcripture; there is nothing in the nature of it at all beyond the power of the devil, if he be not reſtrained by God; for there is nothing in the nature of the effect that is ſpiritual, implying any vital communication of God. A truly ſpiritual application of the word of God is of a vaſtly higher nature; as much above the devil's power, as it is, ſo to apply the word of God to a dead corpſe, as to raiſe it to life; or to a ſtone, to turn it into an angel. A ſpiritual application of the word of God conſiſts in *applying it to the heart*, in ſpiritually enlightening, ſanctifying influences. A ſpiritual application of an invitation or offer of the goſpel conſiſts in giving the ſoul a ſpiritual ſenſe or reliſh of the holy and divine bleſſings offered, and alſo the ſweet and wonderful grace of the offerer, in making ſo gracious an offer, and of his holy excellency and faithfulneſs to fulfil what he offers, and his glorious ſufficiency for it; ſo leading and drawing forth the heart to embrace the offer; and thus giving the man evidence of his title to the thing offered. And ſo a ſpiritual application of the promiſes of ſcripture, for the comfort of the ſaints, conſiſts in enlightening their minds to ſee the holy excellency and ſweetneſs of the bleſſings promiſed, and alſo the holy excellency of the promiſer, and his faithfulneſs and ſufficiency; thus drawing forth their hearts to embrace the promiſer, and thing promiſed; and by this means, giving the ſenſible actings of grace, enabling them to ſee their grace, and ſo their title to the promiſe. An application not conſiſting in this divine ſenſe and enlightening of the mind, but conſiſting only in the word's being borne into the thoughts, as if immediately then ſpoken, ſo making perſons believe, on no other foundation, that the promiſe is theirs; is a blind application, and belongs to the ſpirit of darkneſs, and not of light.

When perſons have their affections raiſed after this manner, thoſe affections are really not raiſed by the word of God; the ſcripture is not the foundation of them; it is not any thing contained in thoſe ſcriptures which come to their minds, that raiſe their affections; but truly that effect, *viz.* the ſtrange manner of the word's being ſuggeſted to their minds, and a propoſition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that ſcripture, nor any other; as that *his* ſins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's good pleaſure to give *him in partciular* the kingdom, or the like. There are propoſitions to be found in the Bible, declaring that perſons of ſuch and ſuch qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: but there

there are no propositions to be found in the Bible declaring that such and such particular persons, independent on any previous knowledge of any qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God: and therefore, when any person is comforted, and affected by any such proposition, it is by another word, a word newly coined, and not any word of God contained in the Bible †. And thus many persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, *that no revelation of secret facts by immediated suggestion*, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that sense wherein gracious effects and operations are so.

By *secret facts*, I mean things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that sense that they do not appear to the senses, nor are known by any argumentation, or any evidence to reason, nor any other way, but only by that revelation by immediate suggestion of the ideas of them to the mind. Thus for instance, if it should be revealed to me, that the next year this land would be invaded by a fleet from France, or that such and such persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these events from any thing which now appears in providence; but immediately suggesting and bearing in upon my mind, in an extraordinary manner, the apprehension or ideas of these facts, with a strong suggestion or impression on my mind, that I had no hand in myself, that these things would come to pass: or if it should be revealed to me, that this day there is a battle fought between the armies of such and such powers in Europe; or that such a prince in Europe was this day converted, or is now in a converted state, having been converted formerly, or that one of my neighbours is converted, or that I myself am converted; not by having any other evidence of any of these facts, from whence I argue them, but an

† "Some Christians have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable: but after a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from a word. For though there is a word, which may give a man a *dependence* on Christ, without feeling any work, nay when he feels none, as absolute promises; yet no word giving *assurance*, but that which is made to some work, *He that believeth, or is poor in spirit*, &c. until that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise." *Shepard's Parable of the ten virgins*. Part I. p. 86.

"If God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God: but it is not in this way that godly men do know that they have grace; it is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's Nature of saving Conversion*, p. 84. 85.

immediate

immediate extraordinary ſuggeſtion or excitation of theſe ideas, and a ſtrong impreſſion of them upon my mind: this is a revelation of ſecret facts by immediate ſuggeſtion, as much as if the facts were future; for the facts being paſt, preſent, or future, alters not the caſe, as long as they are ſecret and hidden from my ſenſes and reaſon, and not ſpoken of in ſcripture, nor known by me any other way than by *immediate ſuggeſtion*. If I have it revealed to me, that ſuch a revolution is come to paſs this day in the Ottoman empire, it is the very ſame ſort of revelation, as if it were revealed to me that ſuch a revolution would come to paſs there this day come twelve-month; becauſe, though one is preſent and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other way than by immediate revelation. When Samuel told Saul that the aſſes which he went to ſeek were found, and that his father had left caring for the aſſes and ſorrowed for him; this was by the ſame kind of revelation, as that by which he told Saul, that in the plain of Tabor, there ſhould meet him three men going up to God to Bethel, (1 Sam. x. 2. 3.) though one of theſe things was future, and the other was not. So when Eliſha told the king of Iſrael the words that the king of Syria ſpake in his bed-chamber, it was by the ſame kind of revelation with that by which he foretold many things to come.

It is evident that this revelation of ſecret facts by immediate ſuggeſtion, has nothing of the nature of a ſpiritual and divine operation, in the ſenſe fore-mentioned; there is nothing at all in the nature of the perceptions or ideas themſelves, which are excited in the mind, that is divinely excellent, and ſo, far above all the ideas of natural men; though the manner of exciting the ideas be extraordinary. In thoſe things which are ſpiritual, as has been ſhown, not only *the manner of producing the effect*, but *the effect wrought* is divine, and ſo vaſtly above all that can be in an unſanctified mind. Now ſimply the having an idea of facts, ſetting aſide the manner of producing thoſe ideas, is nothing beyond what the minds of wicked men are ſuſceptible of, without any goodneſs in them; and they all, either have or will have, the knowledge of the truth of the greateſt and moſt important facts, that have been, are, or ſhall be.

And as to the extraordinary manner of producing the ideas or perception of facts, even by immediate ſuggeſtion, there is nothing in it, but what the minds of natural men, while they are yet natural men, are capable of; as is manifeſt in Balaam, and others ſpoken of in the ſcripture. And therefore it appears that

that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate suggestion of secret facts that is spiritual, in the sense in which it has been proved that gracious operations are so. If there be nothing in the ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the mind *by immediate power*, without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the idea of a rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine nature; so that there is nothing hinders but that an unsanctified mind may receive that idea: so God if he pleases, and when he pleases, *immediately, and in an extraordinary manner*, may excite that idea in an unsanctified mind. So also, as there is nothing in the idea or knowledge that such and such particular persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and intitled to heaven, but what unsanctified minds may have and will have concerning many at the day of judgement; so God can if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified mind now: there is no principle wanting in an unsanctified mind, to make it capable of such a suggestion or impression; nor is there any thing in them to exclude, or necessarily to prevent such a suggestion.

And if these suggestions of secret facts be attended with *texts of scripture*, immediately and extraordinarily brought to mind, about some other facts that seem in some respects similar, that does not make the operation to be of a spiritual and divine nature. For that suggestion of words of scripture is no more divine, than the suggestion of the facts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated: and two effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those affections which are properly founded on such immediate suggestions, or supposed suggestions, of secret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is possible that such suggestions may *be the occasion*, or *accidental cause* of gracious affections; for so may a mistake and delusion; but it is never properly the *foundation* of gracious affections: for gracious affections, as has been shewn, are all the effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and high affections, which some have, that have such kind of suggestions or revelations for their very foundation: they look upon these as spiritual discoveries; which is a gross delusion; and this delusion is truly the spring whence their affections flow.

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Here it may be proper to obſerve, that it is exceeding manifeſt from what has been ſaid, that what many perſons call the *witneſs of the Spirit*, that they are the children of God, has nothing in it ſpiritual and divine; and conſequently that the affections built upon it, are vain and deluſive. That which many call the witneſs of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate ſuggeſtion and impreſſion of that fact, otherwiſe ſecret, that they are converted, or made the children of God, and ſo that their ſins are pardoned, and that God has given them a title to heaven. This kind of knowledge, *viz.* knowing that a certain perſon is converted, and delivered from hell, and intitled to heaven, is no divine ſort of knowledge in itſelf. This ſort of fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine kind of ſuggeſtion, in order to impreſs it on the mind, than any other fact which Balaam had impreſſed on his mind. It requires no higher ſort of idea or ſenſation, for a man to have the apprehenſion of his own converſion impreſſed upon him, than to have the apprehenſion of his neighbour's converſion, in like manner, impreſſed: but God, if he pleaſed, might impreſs the knowledge of this fact, that he had forgiven his neighbour's ſins, and given him a title to heaven, as well as any other fact, without any communication of his holineſs: the excellency and importance of the fact, does not at all hinder a natural man's mind being ſuſceptible of an immediate ſuggeſtion and impreſſion of it. Balaam had as excellent, and important, and glorious facts as this, immediately impreſſed on his mind, without any gracious influence; as particularly, the coming of Chriſt, and his ſetting up his glorious kingdom, and the bleſſedneſs of the ſpiritual Iſrael in his peculiar favour, and their happineſs living and dying. Yea, Abimelech king of the Philiſtines, had God's ſpecial favour to a particular perſon, even Abraham, revealed to him, Gen. xx. 6. 7. So it ſeems that he revealed to Laban his ſpecial favour to Jacob, ſee Gen. xxxi. 24. and Pſal. cv. 15. And if a truly good man ſhould have an immediate revelation or ſuggeſtion from God, after the like manner, concerning his favour to his neighbour, or himſelf; it would be no higher kind of influence; it would be no more than a common ſort of influence of God's Spirit; as the gift of prophecy, and all revelation by immediate ſuggeſtion is; ſee 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And though it be true, that it is not poſſible that a natural man ſhould have that individual ſuggeſtion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, becauſe it is not true; yet that does not ariſe from the nature of the influence, or becauſe that kind of influence which ſuggeſts ſuch excellent facts, is too high for

him to be the subject of; but purely from the defect of a fact to be revealed. The influence which immediately suggests this fact, when it is true, is of no different kind from that which immediately suggests other true facts: and so the kind and nature of the influence, is not above what is common to natural men, with good men.

But this is a mean ignoble notion of the witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear children, to suppose that there is nothing in the kind and nature of that influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious benefit, but what is common to natural men, or which men are capable of, and be in the mean time altogether unsanctified, and the children of hell; and that therefore the benefit or gift itself has nothing of the holy nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital communication of that Spirit. This notion greatly debases that high and most exalted kind of influence and operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true witness of the Spirit †. That which is called *the witness of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. is elsewhere in the New Testament called *the seal of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. and iv. 13. alluding to the seal of princes, annexed to the instrument, by which they advanced any of their subjects to some high honour and dignity, or peculiar privilege in the kingdom, as a token of their special favour. Which is an evidence that the influence of the Spirit of the Prince of princes, in sealing his favourites, is far from being of a common kind; and that there is no effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of divinity: as nothing is more royal

† The late venerable Stoddard in his younger time, falling in with the opinion of some others, received this notion of the witness of the Spirit, by way of immediate suggestion; but in the latter part of his life, when he had more thoroughly weighed things, and had more experience, he entirely rejected it; as appears by his treatise of the nature of saving conversion, p. 84. "The Spirit of God doth not testify to particular persons, that they are godly. Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify it to some; and they ground it on Rom. viii. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* They think the Spirit reveals it by giving an inward testimony to it; and some godly men think they have had experience of it: but they may easily mistake; when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up a spirit of faith, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, it is easy to mistake it for a testimony. And that is not the meaning of Paul's words. The Spirit reveals things to us, by opening our eyes to see what is revealed in the word; but the Spirit doth not reveal new truths, not revealed in the word. The Spirit discovers the grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth special actings of faith and love, which are evidential; but it doth not work in way of testimony. If God do but help us to receive the revelations in the word, we shall have comfort enough without new revelations."

than

than the royal seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very end and design of it, to be the most peculiar stamp and confirmation of the royal authority, and great note of distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the king, or belongs to him, may be known from every thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the seal of the great King of heaven and earth instamped on the heart, is something high and holy in its own nature, some excellent communication from the infinite fountain of divine beauty and glory; and not merely a making known a secret fact by revelation or suggestion; which is a sort of influence of the Spirit of God, that the children of the devil have often been the subjects of. The seal of the Spirit is a kind of effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, which natural men, while such, are so far from a capacity of being the subjects of, that they can have no manner of notion or idea of it; agreeable to Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.* There is all reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same mark, evidence, or blessed token of special favour, which is elsewhere called the *seal of the Spirit.*

What has misled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the word WITNESS, its being called the *witness* of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any effect or work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence, from whence men may argue that they are the children of God; but an inward immediate suggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the man, and testified to him, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of a secret voice, or impression: not observing the manner in which the word *witness*, or *testimony*, is often used in the New Testament; where such terms often signify, not only a mere declaring and asserting a thing to be true, but holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued and proved to be true. Thus, Heb. ii. 4. God is said to *bear witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.* Now these miracles, here spoken of, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of assertions, but evidences and proofs. So Acts xiv. 3. *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* And John v. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works*

*which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Again, chap. x. 25. *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.* So the water and the blood are said to bear witness, 1 John v. 8. not that they spake or asserted any thing, but they were proofs and evidences. So God's works of providence, in the rain and fruitful seasons, are spoken of as witnesses of God's being and goodness, *i. e.* they were evidences of these things. And when the scriptures speaks of the *seal* of the Spirit, it is an expression which properly denotes, not an immediate voice or suggestion, but some work or effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine mark upon the soul, to be an evidence, by which God's children might be known. The seals of princes were the distinguishing marks of princes: and thus God's seal is spoken of as God's mark, Rev. vii. 3. *Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;* together with Ezek. ix. 4. *Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.* When God sets his seal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in scripture is called *the seal of the Spirit*, and *the witness*, or *evidence of the Spirit.* And this image instamped by the Spirit on God's childrens hearts, is his own image: that is the evidence by which they are known to be God's children, that they have the image of their Father stamped upon their hearts by the Spirit of adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, *viz.* the image, and the name of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Cant. viii. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm;* it is as much as to say, let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes were wont to bear their image; so that what they set their seal and royal mark upon, had their image left on it. It was the manner of princes of old to have their image engraven on their jewels and precious stones; and the image of Augustus engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman emperors, in Christ's and the apostles times *. And the saints are the jewels of Jesus Christ, the great Potentate, who has the

* See Chambers's dictionary, under the word ENGRAVING.

possession

poſſeſſion of the empire of the univerſe: and theſe jewels have his image inſtamped upon them, by his royal ſignet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the ſcripture means by the ſeal of the Spirit; eſpecially when it is inſtamped in ſo fair and clear a manner, as to be plain to the eye of conſcience; which is what the ſcripture calls *our ſpirit*. This is truly an effect that is *ſpiritual*, *ſupernatural* and *divine*. This is in itſelf of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this ſtamp upon the heart, is ſuch that no natural man can be the ſubject of any thing of the like nature with it. This is the higheſt ſort of witneſs of the Spirit, which it is poſſible the ſoul ſhould be the ſubject of: if there were any ſuch thing as a witneſs of the Spirit by immediate ſuggeſtion or revelation, this would be vaſtly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the heaven is above the earth. This the devil cannot imitate: as to an inward ſuggeſtion of the Spirit of God, by a kind of ſecret voice ſpeaking, and immediately aſſerting and revealing a fact, he can do that which is a thouſand times ſo like to this, as he can to that holy and divine effect, or work of the Spirit of God, which has been now ſpoken of †.

Another

† Mr Shepard is abundant in militating againſt the notion of mens knowing their good eſtate by an immediate witneſs of the Spirit, without judging by any effect or work of the Spirit wrought on the heart, as an evidence and proof that perſons are the children of God. Parab. P. I. p. 134. "*Knowing your election of God.* How ſo? Immediately? Some divines think angels ſee it not ſo, and that it is peculiar to God ſo to do; but mediately; *for our word came in power, and in much aſſurance*, to make you enlarged for God, to turn you from idols unto God, *&c*——." Again in the ſame page, "It is heaven to cleave to him in every command; it is death to depart from any command. *Hereby know we that we are in him.* If it were poſſible to aſk of the angels, how they know they are not devils, they would anſwer, the Lord's will is ours. So here, how do you know you have not the nature of devils, and ſo in a ſtate of devils, bound there until the judgement of the great day? Becauſe God hath changed our vile natures, and made our wills like unto his glorious will." And p. 135. "The *major* is the word, the *minor* experience, and the *concluſion* the Lord's Spirit's work, quickening your ſpirits to it. Now, ſay ſome, how do you know this? Thus you may be miſtaken; for many have been deceived thus. Grant that; and ſhall a child not take bread when it is given him, though dogs ſnatch at it?" And p. 137. If you look to a ſpirit without a work, whilſt you do ſeek conſolation, you cannot avoid the condemnation of the word. You ſay the Spirit has ſpoken peace to you; but do you love Chriſt? I look not to that; but to the Spirit. Why, the word ſaith, *He that loves him not, let him be Anathema.* So, is the league between your ſins and your ſouls broken? Anſ. I look not to that. Why, John ſaith, *He that committeth ſin is of the devil.* Are you new creatures? I look not to that.

Another thing which is a full proof that the ſeal of the Spirit is no revelation of any fact by immediate ſuggeſtion, but is grace itſelf in the ſoul, is, that the *ſeal of the Spirit* is called the *earneſt of the Spirit*, in the ſcripture. It is very plain, that the ſeal of the Spirit is the ſame thing with the earneſt of the Spirit, by 2 Cor. i. 22. *Who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.* And Eph. i. 13. 14. *In whom, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory.* Now the earneſt is part of the money agreed for, given in hand, as a token of the whole, to be paid in due time; a part of the promiſed

that. Why, the word ſaith, *unleſs you be born again*, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Page 176. 177. "A man ſaith, I have Chriſt; and ſo have not they. I aſk, where is the Spirit? You have the deed; where is the ſeal? You have the teſtator; where is the executor? the Spirit in you? Yes, I have it; it has witneſſed Chriſt is mine. Anſ. It has witneſſed; but what has it wrought? where is the power of his death, killing thy luſts? where is the life of the Spirit of Jeſus in you? where is the oil in your veſſel? Truly I look for the Bridegroom; but I regard not that; neither are others to regard it, in way of evidence. Then I ſay, the chief evidence is deſtroyed in the churches. I have known many that have had aſſurances; yet never ſaw them prove right, until it witneſſed this was here. What ſhould be the cauſes of this, and that men ſhould make bluſters in the churches becauſe of this, as though it was building on works? In ſeveral men they are ſeveral. 1. An aptneſs to out-run the truth, and to fall from one extreme to another.——2. The apoſtacy of eminent profeſſors, who have been deceived in their evidencing thus.——3. Corrupt experience.——4. A heart that never felt the bitterneſs and bondage of ſin, as the greateſt evil." Page 215. 216. "The peace, and joy, and aſſurance of that glory, which eye never ſaw, in the ſaints, it is from the witneſs of the Spirit of glory; not only becauſe that God is their God, but becauſe they are his people. It is I ſay from the witneſs of God in his word; not from themſelves, nor from man only, that they approve me; nor from dreams, and diabolical breathings; but from the Spirit of God; he brings tidings of it; and from ſuch a ſpirit (that you may know it) that not only ſhews you God is your God, and ſo you rejoice becauſe of this; for thus it is with many a carnal heart, and he hath peace, being in horror, from this, *the Lord loves me;* but he makes you to rejoice, becauſe you are the Lord's people, becauſe he hath changed your heart: now the peace is ſound, and joy is right: and here I would try the peace of any man." Part II. p. 168. 169. "All the heirs of the promiſes, as heirs that have legacies left them, they go to the will of the deceaſed father; and that comforts, that they hold to, that is ſure; ſuch an one ſhall have it, if his name be there. But if one ſhall ſay, ſuch a one hath promiſed me ſuch lands: Is it in his will? No; but ſince he died, as I was taking a pipe, he came to me: Oh be not deceived!"

Again, in his *Sound Believer*, there is a long diſcourſe of ſanctification as the chief evidence of juſtification, from p. 221, for many pages following; I ſhall tranſcribe but a very ſmall part of it. "Tell me, how you will know that you are juſtified. You will ſay, by the teſtimony of the Spirit. And cannot the ſame Spirit ſhine upon your graces, and witneſs that you are ſanctified,

promiſed inheritance, granted now, in token of full poſſeſſion of the whole hereafter. But ſurely that kind of communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the higheſt and moſt excellent kind of communication, ſomething that is in its own nature ſpiritual, holy and divine, and far from any thing that is common; and therefore high above any thing of the nature of inſpiration, or revelation of hidden facts by ſuggeſtion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earneſt and beginning of glory, but grace itſelf, eſpecially in the more lively and clear exerciſes of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excellent divine thing, *charity that never*

ſanctified, as well? 1 John iv. 13. 24. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Can the Spirit make the one clear to you, and not the other? Oh beloved, it is a ſad thing, to hear ſuch queſtions, and ſuch cold anſwers alſo, that ſanctification poſſibly may be an evidence. May be! Is it not certain? Aſſuredly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own promiſes of favour are not true evidences thereof, and conſequently that they are lies and untruths."

Mr Flavel alſo much oppoſes this notion of the witneſs of the Spirit by immediate revelation. *Sacramental meditations, med.* 4. ſpeaking of the ſealing of the Spirit, he ſays, "In ſealing the believer, he doth not make uſe of an audible voice, nor the miniſtry of angels, nor immediate and extraordinary revelations; but he makes uſe of his own graces, implanted in our hearts, and his own promiſes, written in the ſcripture: and in this method, he uſually brings the doubting trembling heart of a believer to reſt and comfort." Again, *ibid.* "Aſſurance is produced in our ſouls by the reflexive acts of faith: the Spirit helps us to reflect upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our hearts; *hereby we know that we know him*, 1 John ii. 3. To know that we know, is a reflex act. Now it is impoſſible there ſhould be a reflex, before there hath been a direct act. No man can have the evidence of his faith, before the habit is infuſed, and the vital act performed. The object matter, to which the Spirit ſeals, is his own ſanctifying operation." Afterwards, *ibid.* he ſays, "Immediate ways of the Spirit's ſealing are ceaſed. No man may now expect, by any new revelation, or ſign from heaven, by any voice, or extraordinary inſpiration, to have his ſalvation ſealed; but muſt expect that mercy in God's ordinary way and method, ſearching the ſcriptures, examining our own hearts, and waiting on the Lord in prayer. The learned Gerſon gives an inſtance of one that had been long upon the borders of deſpair, and at laſt ſweetly aſſured and ſettled: he anſwered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione;* not by any new revelation, but by ſubjecting my underſtanding to, and comparing my heart with the written word. And Mr Roberts, in his treatiſe of *the covenants*, ſpeaks of another, that ſo vehemently panted after the ſealings and aſſurance of the love of God to his ſoul, that for a long time he earneſtly deſired ſome voice from heaven; and ſometimes, walking in the ſolitary fields, earneſtly deſired ſome miraculous voice from the trees or ſtones there. This was denied him; but in time, a better was afforded, in a ſcriptural way." Again, *ibid.* "This method of ſealing, is beyond all other methods in the world. For in miraculous voices and inſpirations, it is poſſible there may *ſubeſſe falſum*, be found ſome cheat, or impoſtures of the devil: but the Spirit's witneſs in the heart, ſuitable to the revelation in the ſcripture, cannot deceive us."

*faileth*,

*faileth*, which is a prelibation and beginning of the light, sweetness, and blessedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. It is grace that is the seed of glory, and dawning of glory in the heart, and therefore it is grace that is the earnest of the future inheritance. What is it that is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the soul, but spiritual life? and what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy or divine nature: and this is the sum total of the inheritance that Christ purchased for the elect. For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour, or purchaser, and the purchase is made of him; and the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated Gal. iii. 13. 14. and hence the Spirit is often spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4. and chap. ii. 38. 39. Gal. iii. 14. Eph. i. 13. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament, John chap. xiv. xv. xvi. This is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, which shall be given in heaven. (Compare John vii. 37. 38. 39. and John iv. 14. with Rev. xxi. 6. and xxii. 1. 17.) It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit, that the saints have all their light, life, holiness, beauty, and joy in heaven: and it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the same Spirit, that the saints have all light, life, holiness, beauty and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in this less measure and small beginning, is *the earnest of the Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance, and the first-fruits of the Spirit*, as the apostle calls it, Rom. viii. 22. where, by *the first-fruits of the Spirit*, the apostle undoubtedly means the same vital gracious principle, that he speaks of in all the preceding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in opposition to flesh or corruption. Therefore this earnest of the Spirit, and first-fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the seal of the Spirit, is the vital gracious sanctifying communication and influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts by the Spirit ‡.

And

‡ "After a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is not to judge by the Spirit. For the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal. Now

And indeed the apoſtle, when in that Rom. viii. 16. he ſpeaks of the Spirit's bearing witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God, does ſufficiently explain himſelf, if his words were but attended to. What is here expreſſed, is connected with the two preceding verſes, as reſulting from what the apoſtle had ſaid there, as every reader may ſee. The three verſes together are thus, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God: for ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirits, that we are the children of God.* Here, what the apoſtle ſays, if we take it together, plainly ſhews, that what he has reſpect to, when he ſpeaks of the Spirit's giving us witneſs or evidence that we are God's children, is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a ſpirit of adoption, or ſpirit of a child, diſpoſing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the witneſs or evidence the apoſtle ſpeaks of, that we *are children*, that we *have the ſpirit of children*, or ſpirit of adoption. And what is that, but the ſpirit of love? There are two kinds of ſpirits the apoſtle ſpeaks of, the ſpirit of a ſlave, or *the ſpirit of bondage*, that is *fear*; and the ſpirit of a child, or *ſpirit of adoption*, and that is *love*. The apoſtle ſays, we have not received the ſpirit of bondage, or of ſlaves, which is a ſpirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble ſpirit of children, a ſpirit of love, which naturally diſpoſes us to go to God, as children to a father, and behave towards God as children. And this is the evidence or witneſs which the Spirit of God gives us that we are children. This is the plain ſenſe of the apoſtle: and ſo undoubtedly the apoſtle here is ſpeaking of the very ſame way of caſting out doubting, and *fear*, and the ſpirit of bondage, which the apoſtle John ſpeaks of, 1 John iv. 18. *viz.* by the prevailing of *love*, that is the ſpirit of a child. The ſpirit of bondage works by fear, the ſlave fears the rod; but love cries *Abba, Father*; it diſpoſes us to go to God, and behave ourſelves towards God as children; and it gives us clear evidence of our union to God as his children, and ſo caſts out fear. So that it appears that the witneſs of the Spirit the apoſtle ſpeaks of, is far from being any whiſper, or immediate ſugge-

Now earneſt is part of the money bargained for; the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that ſees not that the Lord is his by that, ſees no God his at all. Oh therefore, do not look for a ſpirit, without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal, without ſeeing and feeling of ſome work firſt. I thank the Lord, I do but pity thoſe that think otherwiſe. If a ſheep of Chriſt, oh, wander not." *Shepard's Par.* P. I. p 85.

ſtion or revelation; but that gracious holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the ſaints, the diſpoſition and temper of children, appearing in ſweet child-like love to God, which caſts out fear, or a ſpirit of a ſlave.

And the ſame thing is evident from all the context: it is plain the apoſtle ſpeaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the hearts of the ſaints, as a gracious principle, ſet in oppoſition to the fleſh or corruption: and ſo he does in the words that immediately introduce this paſſage we are upon, ver. 13. *For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the fleſh, ye ſhall live.*

Indeed it is paſt doubt with me, that the apoſtle has a more ſpecial reſpect to the ſpirit of grace, or the ſpirit of love, or ſpirit of a child, in its more lively actings; for it is *perfect love* or *ſtrong love* only, which ſo witneſſes or evidences that we are children, as to caſt out fear, and wholly deliver from the ſpirit of bondage. The ſtrong and lively exerciſes of a ſpirit of child-like, evangelical, humble love to God, give clear evidence of the ſoul's relation to God, as his child; which does very greatly and directly ſatisfy the ſoul. And though it be far from being true, that the ſoul in this caſe, judges only by an immediate witneſs, without any ſign or evidence; for it judges and is aſſured by the greateſt ſign and cleareſt evidence; yet in this caſe, the ſaint ſtands in no need of multiplied ſigns, or any long reaſoning upon them. And though the ſight of his *relative union* with God, and his being in his favour, is not without a medium, becauſe he ſees it by that medium, *viz.* his love; yet his ſight of the *union of his heart* to God is immediate: love, the bond of union, is ſeen intuitively: the ſaint ſees and feels plainly the union between his ſoul and God; it is ſo ſtrong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is aſſured that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he ſtands in a child-like relation to God, when he plainly ſees a child-like union between God and his ſoul, and hence does boldly, and as it were naturally and neceſſarily cry, *Abba, Father?*

And whereas the apoſtle ſays, the Spirit bears witneſs *with our ſpirits*; by *our ſpirit* here, is meant our conſcience, which is called the ſpirit of man; Prov. xx. 27. *The ſpirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly.* We elſewhere read of the witneſs of this ſpirit of ours; 2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience.* And 1 John iii. 19. 20. 21. *And hereby do we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth*

*knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* When the apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of the Spirit of God bearing witneſs with our ſpirit, he is not to be underſtood of two ſpirits, that are two ſeparate, collateral, independent witneſſes; but it is by one, that we receive the witneſs of the other: the Spirit of God gives the evidence, by infuſing and ſhedding abroad the love of God, the ſpirit of a child, in the heart; and our ſpirit, or our conſcience, receives and declares this evidence for our rejoicing.

Many have been the miſchiefs that have ariſen from that falſe and deluſive notion of the witneſs of the Spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, ſuggeſtion, or declaration from God to a man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, ſometimes with, and ſometimes without a text of ſcripture; and many have been the falſe, and vain, (though very high) affections that have ariſen from hence. And it is to be feared that multitudes of ſouls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore inſiſted the longer on this head.

But I proceed now to a ſecond characteriſtic of gracious affections.

II. The firſt objective ground of gracious affections, is the tranſcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themſelves; and not any conceived relation they bear to ſelf, or ſelf-intereſt.

I ſay, that the ſupremely excellent nature of divine things, is the *firſt*, or *primary and original* objective foundation of the ſpiritual affections of true ſaints; for I do not ſuppoſe that all relation which divine things bear to themſelves, and their own particular intereſt, are wholly excluded from all influence in their gracious affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a ſecondary and conſequential influence in thoſe affections that are truly holy and ſpiritual; as I ſhall ſhew how by and by.

It was before obſerved, that the affection of love is as it were the fountain of all affection; and particularly, that Chriſtian love is the fountain of all gracious affections: now the divine excellency and glory of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, the word of God, the works of God, and the ways of God, *&c.* is the primary reaſon, why a true ſaint loves theſe things; and not any ſuppoſed intereſt that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received from them, or ſhall receive from them, or any ſuch imagined relation which they bear to his intereſt, that ſelf-love can properly be ſaid to be the firſt foundation of his love to theſe things.

Some say that all love arises from self-love; and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to have any love to God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for want of consideration, that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory, or the enjoyment of him, he desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his perfections, are considered as things *agreeable to him*, tending to make him happy; he places his happiness in them, and desires them as things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with delight and joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from self-love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and inquire how the man came *to place his happiness* in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections. There is no doubt, but that after God's glory, and the beholding his perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest happiness in these things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, *&c.*? is not this the fruit of love? a man must first love God, or have his heart united to him, before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God, as his happiness. It is not strong arguing, that because *after* a man has his heart united to God in love, *as a fruit of this*, he desires his glory and enjoyment as his own happiness, that therefore a desire of this happiness of his own, must needs be the *cause and foundation* of his love: unless it be strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, that therefore his son certainly begat him. If *after* a man loves God, and has his heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief good, and on God's good as his own, it will be a *consequence and fruit of this*, that even self-love, or love to his own happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of self-love, went *before* his love to God, and that his love to God was a *consequence and fruit of that*. Something else, entirely distinct from self love, might be the cause of this, *viz.* a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart; whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him,

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prior to all conſiderations of his own intereſt or happineſs, although after this, and as a fruit of this, he neceſſarily ſeeks his intereſt and happineſs in God.

There is ſuch a thing, as a kind of love or affection, that a man may have towards perſons or things, which *does properly ariſe* from ſelf love; a preconceived relation to himſelf, or ſome reſpect already manifeſted by another to him, or ſome benefit already received or depended on, *is truly the firſt foundation* of his love, and what his affection does wholly ariſe from; and is what precedes any reliſh of, or delight in the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the firſt thing that draws a man's benevolence to another, is the beholding thoſe qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themſelves, and the ſubject of them, on this account, worthy of eſteem and good-will, love ariſes in a very different manner, than when it firſt ariſes from ſome gift beſtowed by another, or depended on from him, as a judge loves and favours a man that has bribed him; or from the relation he ſuppoſes another has to him, as a man who loves another, becauſe he looks upon him as his child. When love to another ariſes thus, it does truly and properly ariſe from ſelf-love.

That kind of affection to God or Jeſus Chriſt, which does thus properly ariſe from ſelf-love, cannot be a truly gracious and ſpiritual love; as appears from what has been ſaid already: for ſelf-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore ſurely nothing that is the mere reſult of it, can be ſupernatural and divine, in the manner before deſcribed †. Chriſt plainly ſpeaks of this kind of love, as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men, Luke vi. 32. *If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them.* And the devil himſelf knew that that kind of reſpect to God which was ſo mercenary, as to be only for benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthleſs in the ſight of God; otherwiſe he never would have made uſe of ſuch a ſlander before God, againſt Job, as in Job i. 9. 10. *Doth Job ſerve God for nought? haſt not thou made an hedge about him, and about his houſe,* &c.—? Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in caſe the accuſation had been true, by allowing that that matter ſhould be tried, and that Job ſhould

† "There is a natural love to Chriſt, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and ſpiritual, for himſelf, whereby the Lord only is exalted." *Shepard's Par. of the ten Virgins*, P. I. p. 25.

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be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the proof of the sincerity and goodness of his respect, upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be *true love* of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of *its true loveliness?* how can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness sake? how can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? this infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that excellency in him, which is the foundation of all that is in any manner of respect good or desirable in him? they whose affection to God is founded first on his profitableness to them, their affection begins at the wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest; and have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, the first fountain of all loveliness of every kind, and so the first foundation of all true love.

A natural principle of self-love may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine nature. There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections of the soul of man, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from self-love, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited *against* another, or in opposition to another, for something in him that crosses self-love: gratitude is an affection one has *towards* another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits self-love. And there may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love; as there may be anger without any proper hatred, as in parents towards

towards their children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the same time have a strong habitual love to them. This gratitude is the principle which is in exercise in wicked men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the 6th of Luke, where he says, *Sinners love those that love them;* and which he declares concerning even the publicans, who were some of the most carnal and profligate sort of men, Matth. v. 46. This is the very principle that is wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and it is a principle that even the brute beasts do exercise; a dog will love his master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them, whom at the same time they have an habitual enmity against. Thus Saul was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life; and yet remained an habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; so they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the same self-love may work after the same manner towards God, as towards men. And we have manifest instances of it in scripture; as indeed the children of Israel, *who sang God's praises* at the Red sea, *but soon forgat God's works:* and in Naaman the Syrian, who was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprosy, so as to have his heart engaged thenceforward to worship the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was Nebuchadnezzar greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shews a dreadful prevalence of wickedness, when it even overbears, and suppresses the better principles of human nature: as it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were *without natural affection*, Rom. ii. 31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, are evidences of an high degree of *vice*, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection, has the nature of *virtue*, or *saving grace*.

Self-love, through the exercise of a mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways. A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have been educated in, or have some way imbibed; as though he

he were only goodneſs and mercy, and no revenging juſtice; or as though the exerciſes of his goodneſs were neceſſary, and not free and ſovereign; or as though his goodneſs were dependent on what is in them, and as it were conſtrained by them. Men on ſuch grounds as theſe, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving ſuch a God as reigns in heaven.

Again, ſelf-love may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great inſenſibility of their ſtate with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conſcience to make them ſenſible how dreadfully they have provoked God to anger; they have no ſenſe of the heinouſneſs of ſin, as againſt God, and of the infinite and terrible oppoſition of the holy nature of God againſt it: and ſo having formed in their minds ſuch a God as ſuits them, and thinking God to be ſuch an one as themſelves, who favours and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a ſort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And mens affections may be much moved towards God, from ſelf-love, by ſome remarkable outward benefits received from God; as it was with Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and the children of Iſrael at the Red ſea.

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does ariſe in men, from an opinion of the favour and love of God to them, as the firſt foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and diſtreſs through fears of hell, they may ſuddenly get a notion, through ſome impreſſion on their imagination, or immediate ſuggeſtion with or without texts of ſcripture, or by ſome other means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their ſins, and made them his children; and this is the firſt thing that cauſes their affections to flow towards God and Jeſus Chriſt: and then after this, and upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Chriſt may ſeem excellent. And if ſuch perſons are aſked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himſelf? they would perhaps readily anſwer, Yes; when indeed, if the matter be ſtrictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchaſed and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the diſtinguiſhing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God: and they allow God to be lovely in himſelf, no otherwiſe, than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above moſt in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wiſdom in preferring, dignifying and exalting them, and will do for them juſt as they would have him.

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When once they are firm in this apprehenſion, it is eaſy to own God and Chriſt to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is eaſy for them to own Chriſt to be a lovely perſon, and the beſt in the world, when they are firſt firm in it, that he, though Lord of the univerſe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart ſwallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond moſt of their neighbours, and loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in heaven. When this is the caſe with carnal men, their very luſts will make him ſeem lovely: pride itſelf will prejudice them in favour of that which they call Chriſt: ſelfiſh proud man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his intereſt, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this ſort of perſons begin, ſo they go on. Their affections are raiſed from time to time, primarily on this foundation of ſelf-love and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a falſe notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulſes, and whiſpers, and external repreſentations, immediately made to their imagination. Theſe things they often have; which they take to be manifeſtations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others of mankind; and ſo their affections are often renewedly ſet a-going.

Whereas the exerciſes of true and holy love in the ſaints ariſe in another way. They do not firſt ſee that God loves them, and then ſee that he is lovely; but they firſt ſee that God is lovely, and that Chriſt is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are firſt captivated with this view, and the exerciſes of their love are wont from time to time to begin here, and to ariſe primarily from theſe views; and then, conſequentially, they ſee God's love, and great favour to them†. The ſaint's affections begin with God; and ſelf-love has a hand in theſe affections conſequentially, and ſecondarily only. On the contrary, thoſe falſe affections begin with ſelf, and an acknowledgment of an excellency in God, and an affectedneſs with it, is only conſequential and dependent. In the love of the true ſaint God is the loweſt foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards, wherein ſelf love is concerned as an handmaid: on the contrary, the hypocrite lays himſelf at the bottom of all, as the firſt foundation, and lays on God as the ſuperſtructure;

† "There is a ſeeing of Chriſt after a man believes, which is Chriſt in his love, &c. But I ſpeak of that firſt ſight of him that precedes the ſecond act of faith; and it is an intuitive, or real ſight of him, as he is in his glory" *Shepard's Pur. of the ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 74.

and even his acknowledgment of God's glory itself, depends on his regard to his private interest.

Self-love may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them, as parts of a community: as a natural principle of self-love, without any other principle, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the nation to which he belongs: as for instance, in the present war, self-love may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and sorry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. So the same natural principles may extend further, and even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of other planets; if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits that mankind have received beyond the fallen angels. And hence men, from this principle, may be much affected with the wonderful goodness of God to mankind, his great goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen man, and the marvellous love of Christ in suffering such great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in heaven for us; looking on themselves as persons concerned and interested, as being some of this species of creatures, so highly favoured: the same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things that I have said do by no means imply that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection: they imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is merely natural, and that when persons have affections towards God only or primarily for benefits received, their affection is only the exercise of a natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that gratitude which natural men experience. It differs in the following respects:

1. True gratitude or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation laid before, of love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. The gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, *viz.* God's own excellency; and hence the affections

fections are disposed to flow out, on occasions of God's kindness. The saint having seen the glory of God, and his heart overcome by it, and captivated into a supreme love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindnesses received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in Saul towards David: but this is not the same kind of thing, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, that his heart was before possessed with a high esteem of, and love to; whose heart by this means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with gratitude, and affected in another manner. Self-love is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the saints love God for his kindness to them, Psal. cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication.* But something else is included; and another love prepares the way, and lays the foundation for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious gratitude, men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature. That wonderful and unparallelled grace of God, which is manifested in the work of redemption, and shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears so to the angels; it is a great part of the moral perfection and beauty of God's nature. This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the saint who exercises a gracious thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such; though his concern in it serves the more to engage his mind, and raise the attention and affection; and self-love here assists as an handmaid, being subservient to higher principles, to lead forth the mind to the view and contemplation, and engage and fix the attention, and heighten the joy and love. God's kindness to them is a glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the beauty of the attribute of God's goodness: the exercises and displays of this attribute, by this means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy thankfulness to God, the concern our interest has in God's goodness, is not the first foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the heart before, in that stock of love which was to God, for his excellency in himself, that makes the heart tender, and susceptive of such impressions from his goodness to us. Nor is our own interest, or the benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective ground of the present exercises of the affec-

tion, but God's goodneſs, as part of the beauty of his nature; although the manifeſtations of that lovely attribute, ſet immediately before our eyes, in the exerciſes of it for us, be the ſpecial occaſion of the mind's attention to that beauty, at that time, and ſerves to fix the attention, and heighten the affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object againſt the whole that has been ſaid, that text, 1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us*, as though this implied that God's love to the true ſaints were the *firſt foundation* of their love to him.

In anſwer to this I would obſerve, that the apoſtle's drift in theſe words, is to magnify the love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no love to him; as will be manifeſt to any one who compares this verſe and the two following, with the 9th, 10th, and 11th verſes. And that God loved us, when we had no love to him, the apoſtle proves by this argument, that God's love to the elect, is the ground of their love to him. And that it is three ways. 1. The ſaints love to God is the fruit of God's love to them, as it is the gift of that love. God gave them a ſpirit of love to him, becauſe he loved them from eternity. And in this reſpect God's love to his elect is the firſt foundation of their love to him, as it is the foundation of their regeneration, and the whole of their redemption. 2. The exerciſes and diſcoveries that God has made of his wonderful love to ſinful men, by Jeſus Chriſt, in the work of redemption, is one of the chief manifeſtations, which God has made of the glory of his moral perfection, to both angels and men; and ſo is one main objective ground of the love of both to God; in a good conſiſtence with what was ſaid before. 3. God's love to a particular elect perſon, diſcovered by his converſion, is a great manifeſtation of God's moral perfection and glory to him, and a proper occaſion of the excitation of the love of holy gratitude, agreeable to what was before ſaid. And that the ſaints do in theſe reſpects love God, becauſe he firſt loved them, fully anſwers the deſign of the apoſtle's argument in that place. So that no good argument can be drawn from hence, againſt a ſpiritual and gracious love in the ſaints, ariſing primarily from the excellency of divine things, as they are in themſelves, and not from any conceived relation they bear to their intereſt.

And as it is with the love of the ſaints, ſo it is with their joy, and ſpiritual delight and pleaſure: the firſt foundation of it is not any conſideration or conception of their intereſt in divine things; but it primarily conſiſts in the ſweet entertainment their

their minds have in the view or contemplation of the divine and holy beauty of these things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main difference between the joy of the hypocrite, and the joy of the true saint. The former rejoices in himself; self is the first foundation of his joy: the latter rejoices in God. The hypocrite has his mind pleased and delighted, in the first place, with his own privilege, and the happiness which he supposes he has attained to, or shall attain to. True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures; it is the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment, they have in the view of the beautiful and delightful nature of divine things, is the foundation of the joy that they have afterwards, in the consideration of their being theirs. But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: they first rejoice and are elevated with it, that they are made so much of by God; and then on that ground, he seems in a sort, lovely to them.

The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfection; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, is his own beauty; he appears in himself the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The way of salvation by Christ is a delightful way to him, for the sweet and admirable manifestations of the divine perfections in it: the holy doctrines of the gospel, by which God is exalted and man abased, holiness honoured and promoted, and sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign love manifested, are glorious doctrines in his eyes, and sweet to his taste, prior to any conception of his interest in these things. Indeed the saints rejoice in their interest in God, and that Christ is theirs; and so they have great reason: but this is not the first spring of their joy. They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs. They first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, and the excellency of his grace, and the beauty of the way of salvation by him, and then they have a secondary joy, in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent grace is theirs *. But that which is the

* Dr Owen on *the Spirit*, p. 199. speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "The effects of this work on the mind, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not so far as to give it delight, complacency, and satisfaction,

the true saint's superstructure is the hypocrite's foundation. When they hear of the wonderful things of the gospel, of God's great love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, and the great things Christ has purchased, and promised to the saints, and hear these things livelily and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear; but if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great love of Christ so vastly distinguishing some from others; for self-love, and even pride itself, makes them affect great distinction from others. No wonder, in this confident opinion of their own good estate, that they feel well under such doctrine, and are pleased in the highest degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their joy is really a joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the joy of hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass, that in their rejoicings and elevations, they are wont to keep their eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual discoveries or experiences, their minds are taken up about them, admiring their own experiences: and what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the glory of God, or beauty of Christ, but the beauty of their experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, what a good experience is this! what a great discovery is this! what wonderful things have I met with! and so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, and his beauty and fulness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences; instead of feeding and feasting their souls in the view of what is without them, *viz.* the innate, sweet, refreshing

satisfaction, in the lovely spiritual nature and excellencies of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things, as that in their own spiritual nature they suit, please, and satisfy it; so that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and rests in them; Rom. vi. 17. chap. xii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 13. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 18. chap. iv 6. This, the work we have insisted on, reacheth not unto. For notwithstanding any discovery that is made therein of spiritual things unto the mind, it finds not an immediate, direct, spiritual excellency in them; but only with respect unto some benefit or advantage, which is to be attained by means thereof. It will not give such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Jesus Christ, called his glory shining in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as that the soul, in its first direct view of it, should, for what it is in itself, admire it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual solace, with refreshment, in it. But such a light, such a knowledge, it communicates, as that a man may like it well in its effects, as a way of mercy and salvation."

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amiableneſs of the things exhibited in the goſpel, their eyes are off from theſe things, or at leaſt they view them only as it were ſide-ways; but the object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience; and they are feeding their ſouls, and feaſting a ſelfiſh principle with a view of their diſcoveries: they take more comfort in their diſcoveries than in Chriſt diſcovered, which is the true notion of living upon experiences and frames; and not a uſing experiences as the ſigns, on which they rely for evidence of their good eſtate, which ſome call living on experiences; though it be very obſervable, that ſome of them who do ſo, are moſt notorious for living upon experiences, according to the true notion of it.

The affections of hypocrites are very often after this manner; they are firſt much affected with ſome impreſſion on their imagination, or ſome impulſe, which they take to be an immediate ſuggeſtion, or teſtimony from God, of his love and their happineſs, and high privilege in ſome reſpect, either with or without a text of ſcripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great diſcovery; and hence ariſe high affections. And when their affections are raiſed, then they view thoſe high affections, and call them great and wonderful experiences; and they have a notion that God is greatly pleaſed with thoſe affections; and this affects them more; and ſo they are affected with their affections. And thus their affections riſe higher and higher, until they ſometimes are perfectly ſwallowed up: and ſelf-conceit, and a fierce zeal riſes withal; and all is built like a caſtle in the air, on no other foundation but imagination, ſelf-love, and pride.

And as the thoughts of this ſort of perſons are, ſo is their talk; for out of the abundance of their heart, their mouth ſpeaketh. As in their high affections, they keep their eye upon the beauty of their experiences, and greatneſs of their attainments; ſo they are great talkers about themſelves. The true ſaint, when under great ſpiritual affections, from the fulneſs of his heart, is ready to be ſpeaking much of God, and his glorious perfections and works, and of the beauty and amiableneſs of Chriſt, and the glorious things of the goſpel; but hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the diſcovery, than they do of the thing diſcovered; they are full of talk about the great things they have met with, the wonderful diſcoveries they have had, how ſure they are of the love of God to them, how ſafe their condition is, and how they know they ſhall go to heaven, *&c.*

A true ſaint, when in the enjoyment of true diſcoveries of the ſweet glory of God and Chriſt, has his mind too much captivated

tivated and engaged by what he views without himſelf, to ſtand at that time to view himſelf, and his own attainments: it would be a diverſion and loſs which he could not bear, to take his eye off from the raviſhing object of his contemplation, to ſurvey his own experience, and to ſpend time in thinking with himſelf, what an high attainment this is, and what a good ſtory I now have to tell others. Nor does the pleaſure and ſweetneſs of his mind at that time, chiefly ariſe from the conſideration of the ſafety of his ſtate, or any thing he has in view of his own qualifications, experiences, or circumſtances; but from the divine and ſupreme beauty of what is the object of his direct view, without himſelf; which ſweetly entertains, and ſtrongly holds his mind.

As the love and joy of hypocrites, are all from the ſource of ſelf-love; ſo it is with their other affections, their ſorrow for ſin, their humiliation and ſubmiſſion, their religious deſires and zeal: every thing is as it were paid for before-hand, in God's highly gratifying their ſelf-love, and their luſts, by making ſo much of them, and exalting them ſo highly, as things are in their imagination. It is eaſy for nature, as corrupt as it is, under a notion of being already ſome of the higheſt favourites of heaven, and having a God who does ſo protect them and favour them in their ſins, to love this imaginary God that ſuits them ſo well, and to extol him, and ſubmit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high affections of many are all built on the ſuppoſition of their being eminent ſaints. If that opinion which they have of themſelves were taken away, if they thought they were ſome of the lower form of ſaints, (though they ſhould yet ſuppoſe themſelves to be real ſaints) their high affections would fall to the ground. If they only ſaw a little of the ſinfulneſs and vileneſs of their own hearts, and their deformity, in the midſt of their beſt duties and their beſt affections, it would knock their affections on the head; becauſe their affections are built upon ſelf, therefore ſelf-knowledge would deſtroy them. But as to truly gracious affections, they are built elſewhere; they have their foundation out of ſelf, in God and Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore a diſcovery of themſelves, of their own deformity, and the meanneſs of their experiences, though it will purify their affections, yet it will not deſtroy them, but in ſome reſpects ſweeten and heighten them.

III. Thoſe affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the lovelineſs of the moral excellency of divine things. Or, (to expreſs it otherwiſe), a love to divine things for the beauty

beauty and ſweetneſs of their moral excellency, is the firſt beginning and ſpring of all holy affections.

Here, for the ſake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things.

And it may be obſerved, that the word *moral* is not to be underſtood here, according to the common and vulgar acceptation of the word, when men ſpeak of *morality*, and a *moral* behaviour; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and eſpecially the duties of the ſecond table; or intending no more at fartheſt, than ſuch ſeeming virtues, as proceed from natural principles, in oppoſition to thoſe virtues that are more inward, ſpiritual, and divine; as the honeſty, juſtice, generoſity, good-nature, and public ſpirit of many of the heathen, are called *moral* virtues, in diſtinction from the holy faith, love, humility, and heavenly-mindedneſs of true Chriſtians: I ſay, the word *moral* is not to be underſtood thus in this place.

But in order to a right underſtanding what is meant, it muſt be obſerved, that divines commonly make a diſtinction between *moral* good and evil, and *natural* good and evil. By *moral* evil, they mean the evil of ſin, or that evil which is againſt duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By *natural* evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly oppoſed to duty; but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any reſpect to a rule of duty. So the evil of ſuffering is called natural evil, ſuch as pain and torment, diſgrace, and the like: theſe things are contrary to mere nature, contrary to the nature of both bad and good, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. So likewiſe natural defects are called natural evils, as if a child be monſtrous, or a natural fool; theſe are natural evils, but are not moral evils, becauſe they have not properly the nature of the evil of ſin. On the other hand, as by moral evil, divines mean the evil of ſin, or that which is contrary to what is right; ſo by *moral* good, they mean that which is contrary to ſin, or that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or ſo as is moſt fit, and ſuitable, and lovely. By *natural* good, they mean that good that is entirely of a different kind from holineſs or virtue, *viz.* that which perfects or ſuits nature, conſidering nature abſtractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or meaſure of right and wrong.

Thus pleaſure is a natural good; ſo is honour; ſo is ſtrength;

ſo is ſpeculative knowledge, human learning, and policy. Thus there is a diſtinction to be made between the natural good that men are poſſeſſed of, and their moral good; and alſo between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven: the great capacity of their underſtandings, and their great ſtrength, and the honourable circumſtances they are in as the great miniſters of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is the natural good which they are poſſeſſed of; but their perfect and glorious holineſs and goodneſs, their pure and flaming love to God, and to the ſaints, and one another, is their moral good. So divines make a diſtinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the *moral* perfections of God, they mean thoſe attributes which God exerciſes as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming, and lovely; ſuch as his righteouſneſs, truth, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs; or, in one word, his holineſs. By God's *natural* attributes or perfections, they mean thoſe attributes, wherein, according to our way of conceiving of God, conſiſts, not the holineſs or moral goodneſs of God, but his greatneſs; ſuch as his power, his knowledge whereby he knows all things, and his being eternal, from everlaſting to everlaſting, his omnipreſence, and his awful and terrible majeſty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being, is more immediately ſeated in the heart or will of moral agents. That intelligent being whoſe will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.

This moral excellency of an intelligent being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely ſeeming and counterfeit, is *holineſs*. Therefore *holineſs* comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other *true virtue*, but *real holineſs*. Holineſs comprehends all the true virtue of a good man, his love to God, his gracious love to men, his juſtice, his charity, and bowels of mercies, his gracious meekneſs and gentleneſs, and all other true Chriſtian virtues that he has, belong to his holineſs. So the holineſs of God in the more extenſive ſenſe of the word, and the ſenſe in which the word is commonly, if not univerſally uſed concerning God in ſcripture, is the ſame with the moral excellency of the divine nature, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteouſneſs, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs. As in holy men, their charity, Chriſtian kindneſs and mercy, belongs to their holineſs; ſo the kindneſs and mercy of God, belongs to his holineſs. Ho-

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lineſs in man, is but the image of God's holineſs: there are not more virtues belonging to the image, than are in the original: derived holineſs has not more in it, than is in that underived holineſs, which is its fountain: there is no more than grace for grace, or grace in the image, anſwerable to grace in the original.

As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which are ſummed up in his *holineſs*, and his natural attributes, of ſtrength, knowledge, *&c.* that conſtitute the *greatneſs* of God; ſo there is a twofold image of God in man, his *moral* or *ſpiritual* image, which is his holineſs, that is the image of God's moral excellency; (which image was loſt by the fall); and God's *natural* image, conſiſting in man's reaſon and underſtanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which is the image of God's natural attributes.

From what has been ſaid, it may eaſily be underſtood what I intend, when I ſay that a love to divine things for the beauty of their *moral excellency*, is the beginning and ſpring of all holy affections. It has been already ſhown, under the former head, that the firſt objective ground of all holy affections is the ſupreme excellency of divine things as they are in themſelves, or in their own nature; I now proceed further, and ſay more particularly, that that kind of excellency of the nature of divine things, which is the firſt objective ground of all holy affections, is their moral excellency, or their holineſs. *Holy perſons*, in the exerciſe of *holy affections*, do love divine things primarily for their *holineſs*: they love God, in the firſt place, for the beauty of his holineſs or moral perfection, as being ſupremely amiable in itſelf. Not that the ſaints, in the exerciſe of gracious affections, do love God only for his holineſs; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite greatneſs, power, and knowledge, and terrible majeſty of God, is pleaſant to them. But their love to God for his holineſs is what is moſt fundamental and eſſential in their love. Here it is that true love to God begins; all other holy love to divine things flows from hence: this is the moſt eſſential and diſtinguiſhing thing that belongs to a holy love to God, with regard to the foundation of it. A love to God for the beauty of his moral attributes, leads to, and neceſſarily cauſes a delight in God for all his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes: for infinite holineſs ſuppoſes infinite wiſdom, and an infinite capacity and greatneſs; and all the attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and lovelineſs of all intelligent beings does primarily and moſt eſſentially conſiſt in their moral excellency or holineſs. Herein conſiſts the lovelineſs of the angels, without which, with all their natural perfections, their ſtrength, and their knowledge, they would have no more lovelineſs than devils. It is moral excellency alone, that is in itſelf, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: it is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excellent or otherwiſe, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not. Strength and knowledge does not render any being lovely, without holineſs, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely, when joined with holineſs. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their ſtrength and knowledge, becauſe theſe natural perfections of theirs are ſanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very ſtrong, and of great natural underſtanding, they be not the more lovely: they are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holineſs of an intelligent creature, is the beauty of all his natural perfections. And ſo it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being: holineſs is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the *beauty of holineſs*, Pſal. xxix. 2. Pſal. xcvi. 9. and cx. 3. This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wiſdom, that it is a holy wiſdom, and not a wicked ſubtilty and craftineſs. This makes his majeſty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy majeſty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a holy immutability, and not an inflexible obſtinacy in wickedneſs.

And therefore it muſt needs be, that a ſight of God's lovelineſs muſt begin here. A true love to God muſt begin with a delight in his holineſs, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwiſe than as (according to our way of conceiving of God) it derives its lovelineſs from this; and therefore it is impoſſible that other attributes ſhould appear lovely, in their true lovelineſs, until this is ſeen; and it is impoſſible that any perfection of the divine nature ſhould be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true lovelineſs of all God's perfections, ariſes from the lovelineſs of his holineſs; then the true love of all his perfections, ariſes from the love of his holineſs. They that do not ſee the glory of God's holineſs, cannot ſee any thing

thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace: they see nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest: for these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature does primarily consist in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are saints, or holy ones: it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are holy angels, and so not devils; Dan. iv. 13. 17. 23. Matth. xxv. 31. Mark viii. 38. Acts x. 22. Rev. xiv. 10. Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so holy a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so holy; Psal. cxix. 140. *Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.* ver. 128. *I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.* ver. 138 *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.* And 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness.* And Psal xix. 7.—10. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.* Herein does primarily consist the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; even in that he is *the holy One of God*, Acts iii. 14. and *God's holy child*, Acts iv. 27. and *he that is holy, and he that is true*, Rev. iii. 7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, consisting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and compassion to the miserable, *&c.* all is summed up in his holiness. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, does also primarily consist in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a

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holy goſpel, and ſo bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jeſus Chriſt: herein conſiſts the ſpiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines, or doctrines according to godlineſs. And herein does conſiſt the ſpiritual beauty of the way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, that it is ſo holy a way. And herein chiefly conſiſts the glory of heaven, that it is the *holy city*, the *holy Jeruſalem*, *the habitation of God's holineſs*, and ſo *of his glory*, Iſ. lxiii. 15. All the beauties of the new Jeruſalem, as it is deſcribed in the two laſt chapters of Revelation, are but various repreſentations of this: ſee chap. xxi. 2. 10. 11. 18. 21. 27. chap. xxii. 1. 3.

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the ſaints do love all theſe things. Thus they love the word of God, *becauſe it is very pure*. It is on this account they love the ſaints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and thoſe holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes: it is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Chriſt, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the goſpel, and ſweetly acquieſce in the way of ſalvation therein revealed *.

Under the head of the firſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of gracious affection, I obſerved, that there is given to thoſe that are regenerated, a new ſupernatural ſenſe, that is as it were a certain divine ſpiritual taſte, which is in its whole nature diverſe from any former kinds of ſenſation of the mind, as taſting is diverſe from any of the other five ſenſes, and that ſomething is perceived by a true ſaint in the exerciſe of this new ſenſe of mind, in ſpiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the ſweet taſte of honey is diverſe from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it: now this that I have been ſpeaking, *viz.* the beauty of holineſs, is that thing in ſpiritual and divine things, which is perceived by this ſpiritual

* "To the right cloſing with Chriſt's perſon, this is alſo required, to taſte the bitterneſs of ſin, as the greateſt evil: elſe a man will never cloſe with Chriſt, for his holineſs in him, and from him, as the greateſt good. For we told you, that that is the right cloſing with Chriſt for himſelf, when it is for his holineſs. For aſk a whoriſh heart, what beauty he ſees in the perſon of Chriſt; he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteouſneſs, all his works, ſee a beauty in them, becauſe they do ſerve his turn, to comfort him only. Aſk a virgin, he will ſee his happineſs in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable is his holineſs, which is in him to make him holy too. As in marriage, it is the perſonal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reaſon, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Chriſt much more." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 84.

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ſenſe, that is ſo diverſe from all that natural men perceive in them; this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this ſpiritual ſenſe; this is the ſweetneſs that is the proper object of this ſpiritual taſte. The ſcripture often repreſents the beauty and ſweetneſs of holineſs as the grand object of a ſpiritual taſte and ſpiritual appetite. This was the ſweet food of the holy ſoul of Jeſus Chriſt, John iv. 32. 34. *I have meat to eat, that ye know not of.*——*My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work.* I know of no part of the holy ſcriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and ſincere godlineſs, are ſo much of ſet purpoſe, and ſo fully and largely inſiſted on and delineated, as the 119th Pſalm; the pſalmiſt declares his deſign in the firſt verſes of the pſalm, and he keeps his eye on this deſign all along, and purſues it to the end: but in this pſalm the excellency of holineſs is repreſented as the immediate object of a ſpiritual taſte, reliſh, appetite and delight, *God's law*, that grand expreſſion and emanation of the holineſs of God's nature, and preſcription of holineſs to the creature, is all along repreſented as the food and entertainment, and as the great object of the love, the appetite, the complacence and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments *above gold, yea, the fineſt gold*, and to which they are *ſweeter than the honey, and honey-comb*; and that upon account of their holineſs, as I obſerved before. The ſame pſalmiſt declares, that this is the ſweetneſs that a ſpiritual taſte reliſhes in God's law, Pſal. xix. 7. 8. 9. 10. *The law of the Lord is perfect:*——*the commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:*——*the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be deſired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb.*

A holy love has a holy object: the holineſs of love conſiſts eſpecially in this, that it is the love of that which is holy, as holy, or for its holineſs; ſo that it is the holineſs of the object, which is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy nature muſt needs love that in holy things chiefly, which is moſt agreeable to itſelf; but ſurely that in divine things, which above all others is agreeable to holy nature, is holineſs, becauſe holineſs muſt be above all other things agreeable to holineſs; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itſelf; holy nature muſt be above all things agreeable to holy nature: and ſo the holy nature of God and Chriſt, and the word of God, and other divine things, muſt be above all other things agreeable to the holy nature that is in the ſaints.

And

And again, an holy nature doubtleſs loves holy things, eſpecially on the account of that for which ſinful nature has enmity againſt them: but that for which chiefly ſinful nature is at enmity againſt holy things, is their holineſs; it is for this, that the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and againſt the law of God, and the people of God. Now it is juſt arguing from contraries; from contrary cauſes, to contrary effects; from oppoſite natures, to oppoſite tendencies. We know that holineſs is of a directly contrary nature to wickedneſs: as therefore it is the nature of wickedneſs chiefly to oppoſe and hate holineſs; ſo it muſt be the nature of holineſs chiefly to tend to, and delight in holineſs.

The holy nature in the ſaints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it beſt appears) is principally engaged by the holineſs of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration and praiſe of the bright and burning Seraphim; Iſ. vi. 3. *One cried unto another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* And Rev. iv. 8. *They reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* So the glorified ſaints, chap. xv. 4. *Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.*

And the ſcriptures repreſent the ſaints on earth as adoring God primarily on this account, and admiring and extolling all God's attributes, either as deriving lovelineſs from his holineſs, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praiſe God for his power, his holineſs is the beauty that engages them; Pſal. xcviii. 1. *O ſing unto the Lord a new ſong, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his* HOLY *arm hath gotten him the victory.* So when they praiſe him for his juſtice and terrible majeſty; Pſal. xcix. 2. 3. *The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praiſe thy great and terrible name: for it is* HOLY. ver. 5. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worſhip at his footſtool: for he is* HOLY. ver. 8. 9. *Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worſhip at his holy hill: for the Lord our God is* HOLY. So when they praiſe God for his mercy and faithfulneſs; Pſal. xcvii. 11. 12. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous: and give thanks at the remembrance of his* HOLINESS. 1 Sam. ii. 2. *There is none* HOLY *as the Lord: for there is none beſide thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*

By

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various kinds of creatures shew the difference of their natures, very much, in the different things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true saints, and natural men: natural men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least for their holiness; they have no taste of that kind of good; and so may be said not to know that divine good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them: but the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural, most noble and divine sense given them, by which they perceive it; and it is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing to the heart of a true saint, that is to be found in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his soul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happiness, and which he lots upon for solace and entertainment to his mind, in this world, and full satisfaction and blessedness in another. By this you may examine your love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the word of God, and your joy in them, and also your love to the people of God, and your desires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this sort of beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great seeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, by what has been said you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a profitable good to me, that which greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as *bonum formosum*, a beautiful good in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that the true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God in the first place.

From the things that have been said, it appears, that if persons have a great sense of the *natural* perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in, or implies a sense of the beauty of his *moral* perfections, it is no certain sign of grace: as particularly, mens having a great sense of the *awful greatness, and terrible majesty of God;* for this is only God's natural perfection, and what men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the

beauty of his moral perfection, and have nothing of that ſpiritual taſte which reliſhes this divine ſweetneſs.

It has been ſhown already, in what was ſaid upon the firſt diſtinguiſhing mark of gracious affections, that that which is ſpiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is poſſible any graceleſs perſon ſhould be the ſubject of, while he continues graceleſs. But it is poſſible that thoſe who are wholly without grace, ſhould have a clear ſight, and very great and affecting ſenſe of God's greatneſs, his mighty power, and awful majeſty; for this is what the devils have, though they have loſt the ſpiritual knowledge of God, conſiſting in a ſenſe of the amiableneſs of his moral perfections; they are perfectly deſtitute of any ſenſe or reliſh of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God, (if I may ſo ſpeak), or his awful greatneſs and majeſty; this they behold, and are affected with the apprehenſions of, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all ſhall behold at the day of judgement; God will make all rational beings to behold it to a great degree indeed, angels and devils, ſaints and ſinners: Chriſt will manifeſt his infinite greatneſs, and awful majeſty to every one, in a moſt open, clear and convincing manner, and in a light that none can reſiſt, when *he ſhall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye ſhall ſee him;* when they ſhall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that ſits upon the throne, they are repreſented as ſeeing the glory of God's majeſty, Iſ. ii. 10. 19. 21. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a moſt clear and affecting view of it, in hell, to all eternity. God hath often declared his immutable purpoſe to make all his enemies to know him in this reſpect, in ſo often annexing theſe words to the threatenings he denounces againſt them, *And they ſhall know that I am the Lord*; yea, he hath ſworn that all men ſhall ſee his glory in this reſpect, Numb. xiv. 21. *As truly as I live, all the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord.* And this kind of manifeſtation of God is very often ſpoken of in ſcripture, as made, or to be made, in the ſight of God's enemies in this world; Exod. ix. 16. and chap. xiv. 18. and xv. 16. Pſal. lxvi. 3. and xlvi. 10. and other places innumerable. This was a manifeſtation which God made of himſelf in the ſight of that wicked congregation at mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; ſo that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will ſee, and have a great ſenſe of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, but only the beauty of his moral perfection. They will ſee his infinite greatneſs

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and majesty, his infinite power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, and his eternity and immutability; and they will see and know every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, but only the beauty and amiableness of them: they will see and know that he is perfectly just and righteous, and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will see the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their eyes, but only the *beauty* of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing else that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchadnezzar had a great and very affecting sense of the infinite greatness and awful majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute dominion, and mighty and irresistible power, and of his sovereignty, and that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth, were nothing before him; and also had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. iv. 1. 2. 3. 34. 35. 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections, seems to be very much like his, Dan. vi. 25. *&c.* But the saints and angels do behold the glory of God consisting in the *beauty of his holiness:* and it is this sight only, that will melt and humble the hearts of men, and wean them from the world, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of the awful greatness of God, may overpower mens strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength, no love will be inkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects as it were with omnipotent power, which nothing can withstand.

The sense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them, and raise their joy and praise, as their circumstances may be. This will be the natural effect of it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shown already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the same time that he receives remarkable kindness from God, has a sense of his in-

finite greatneſs, and that he is but nothing in compariſon of him, ſurely this will naturally raiſe his gratitude and praiſe the higher, for kindneſs to one ſo much inferiour. A ſenſe of God's greatneſs had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, under the receipt of that extraordinary favour of his reſtoration, after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beaſts: a ſenſe of God's exceeding greatneſs raiſes his gratitude very high; ſo that he does, in the moſt lofty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him: and much more, if a natural man, at the ſame time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite greatneſs and majeſty, entertains a ſtrong conceit that this great God has made him his child and ſpecial favourite, and promiſed him eternal glory in his higheſt love, will this have a tendency, according to the courſe of nature, to raiſe his joy and praiſe to a great height.

Therefore, it is beyond doubt, that too much weight has been laid, by many perſons of late, on diſcoveries of God's greatneſs, awful majeſty, and natural perfection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy, lovely majeſty of God. And experience does abundantly witneſs to what reaſon and ſcripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many perſons, who have ſeemed to be overpowered with the greatneſs and awful majeſty of God, and conſequentially elevated in the manner that has been ſpoken of, who have been very far from having appearances of a Chriſtian ſpirit and temper, in any manner of proportion, or fruits in practice in any wiſe agreeable; but their diſcoveries have worked in a way contrary to the operation of truly ſpiritual diſcoveries.

Not that a ſenſe of God's greatneſs and natural attributes is not exceeding uſeful and neceſſary. For, as I obſerved before, this is implied in a manifeſtation of the beauty of God's holineſs. Though that be ſomething beyond it, it ſuppoſes it, as the greater ſuppoſes the leſs. And though natural men may have a ſenſe of the natural perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the ſaints, than with natural men; and grace tends to enable men to ſee theſe things in a better manner, than natural men do; and not only enables them to ſee God's natural attributes, but that beauty of thoſe attributes, which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holineſs.

IV. Gracious affections do ariſe from the mind's being enlightened, rightly and ſpiritually to underſtand or apprehend divine things.

Holy

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel; he has some clearer and better view than he had before, when he was not affected: either he receives some understanding of divine things that is new to him; or has his former knowledge renewed after the view was decayed; 1 John iv. 7. *Every one that loveth, knoweth God.* Phil. i. 9. *I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgement.* Rom. x. 2. *They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* Col. iii. 10. *The new man, which is renewed in knowledge.* Psal. xliii. 3. 4. *O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill.* John vi. 45. *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart and enlarges the affections, and so opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven; Luke xi. 52. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.*

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high *. Indeed they have some new apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his mind conceives of. But in many persons those apprehensions or conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. As for instance; when

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* "Many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away: and now their hypocrisy is manifest; if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living Christians, by a formal, barren, unsavoury, unfruitful heart and course; because they never had light to conviction enough as yet.——It is strange to see some people carried with mighty affection against sin and hell, and after Christ. And what is the hell you fear? A dreadful place. What is Christ? They scarce know so much as devils do; but that is all. Oh! trust them not! Many *have*, and these *will* fall away to some lust, or opinion, or pride, or world; and the reason is, they never had light enough, John v. 35. *John was a burning and shining light, and they did joy in him for a season;* yet glorious as it was, they saw not Christ by it, especially not with divine light. It is rare to see Christians

a perſon is affected with a lively idea, ſuddenly excited in his mind, of ſome ſhape, or very beautiful pleaſant form of countenance, or ſome ſhining light, or other glorious outward appearance: here is ſomething apprehended or conceived by the mind; but there is nothing of the nature of inſtruction in it; perſons become never the wiſer by ſuch things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and man, or the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, or any thing contained in any of the doctrines of the goſpel. Perſons by theſe external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further underſtanding of his word, or any of his ways or works. Truly ſpiritual and gracious affections are not raiſed after this manner; theſe ariſe from the enlightening of the underſtanding to underſtand the things that are taught of God and Chriſt, in a new manner, the coming to a new underſtanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, ſome new view of Chriſt in his ſpiritual excellencies and fulneſs, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, whereby he now ſees how it is, and underſtands thoſe divine and ſpiritual doctrines which once were fooliſhneſs to him. Such enlightenings of the underſtanding as theſe, are things entirely different in their nature, from ſtrong ideas of ſhapes and colours, and outward brightneſs and glory, or ſounds and voices. That all gracious affections do ariſe from ſome inſtruction or enlightening of the underſtanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which ariſe from ſuch impreſſion on the imagination, are not gracious affections, beſides the things obſerved before, which make this evident.

Hence alſo it appears, that affections ariſing from texts of ſcripture coming to the mind are vain, when no inſtruction received in the underſtanding from thoſe texts, or any thing taught in thoſe texts, is the ground of the affection, but the

ſtians full both of light and affection. And therefore conſider of this; many a man has been well brought up, and is of a ſweet loving nature, mild and gentle, and harmleſs, likes and loves the beſt things, and his meaning, and mind, and heart is good, and has more in heart than in ſhew; and ſo hopes all ſhall go well with him. I ſay, there may lie greateſt hypocriſy under greateſt affections; eſpecially if they want light. You ſhall be hardened in your hypocriſy by them. I never liked violent affections and pangs, but only ſuch as were dropped in by light; becauſe thoſe come from an external principle, and laſt not, but theſe do. Men are not affrighted by the light of the ſun, though clearer than the lightning." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 146.

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manner of their coming to the mind. When Chriſt makes the ſcripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, it is *by opening the ſcriptures to their underſtandings*; Luke xxiv. 32. *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures?* It appears alſo that the affection which is occaſioned by the coming of a text of ſcripture muſt be vain, when the affection is founded on ſomething that is ſuppoſed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other ſcripture; becauſe ſuch ſuppoſed inſtruction is not real inſtruction, but a miſtake, and miſapprehenſion of the mind. As for inſtance, when perſons ſuppoſe that they are expreſsly taught by ſome ſcripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their ſins are forgiven, that God is their father, and the like; this is a miſtake or miſapprehenſion; for the ſcripture no where reveals the individual perſons who are beloved, expreſsly; but only by conſequence, by revealing the qualifications of perſons that are beloved of God: and therefore this matter is not to be learned from ſcripture any other way than by conſequence, and from theſe qualifications; for things are not to be *learned from* the ſcripture any other way than they are *taught in* the ſcripture.

Affections really ariſe from ignorance, rather than inſtruction, in theſe inſtances which have been mentioned; as likewiſe in ſome others that might be mentioned. As ſome, when they find themſelves free of ſpeech in prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and ſo their affections are ſet a-going and increaſed; when they look not into the cauſe of this freedom of ſpeech, which may ariſe many other ways beſides God's ſpiritual preſence. So ſome are much affected with ſome apt thoughts that come into their minds about the ſcripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they aſcribe many of the workings of their own minds, which they have a high opinion of, and are pleaſed and taken with, to the ſpecial immediate influences of God's Spirit; and ſo are mightily affected with their privilege. And there are ſome inſtances of perſons, in whom it ſeems manifeſt, that the firſt ground of their affection is ſome bodily ſenſation. The animal ſpirits, by ſome cauſe, (and probably ſometimes by the devil), are ſuddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable motion, cauſing perſons to feel pleaſantly in their bodies; the animal ſpirits are put into ſuch a motion as is wont to be connected with the exhilaration of the mind; and the ſoul, by the laws of the union of ſoul and body, hence feels pleaſure.

ſure. The motion of the animal ſpirits does not firſt ariſe from any affection or apprehenſion of the mind whatſoever; but the very firſt thing that is felt, is an exhilaration of the animal ſpirits, and a pleaſant external ſenſation, it may be in their breaſts. Hence through ignorance, the perſon being ſurprized, begins to think, ſurely this is the Holy Ghoſt coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raiſed: there is firſt great joy; and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle. For though, as I obſerved before, it is the ſoul only that is *the ſeat of the affections;* yet this hinders not but that bodily ſenſations may, in this manner, be *an occaſion of affections* in the mind.

And if mens religious affections do truly ariſe from ſome inſtruction or light in the underſtanding; yet the affection is not gracious, unleſs the light which is the ground of it be ſpiritual. Affections may be excited by that underſtanding of things, which they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of the faculties of the mind. Men may be much affected by knowledge of things of religion that they obtain this way; as ſome philoſophers have been mightily affected, and almoſt carried beyond themſelves, by the diſcoveries they have made in mathematicks and natural philoſophy. So men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God aſſiſts mens faculties to a greater degree of that kind of underſtanding of religious matters, which they have in ſome degree, by only the ordinary exerciſe and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in ſcripture, *that were once enlightened:* but theſe affections are not ſpiritual.

There is ſuch a thing, if the ſcriptures are of any uſe to teach us any thing, as a ſpiritual, ſupernatural underſtanding of divine things, that is peculiar to the ſaints, and which thoſe who are not ſaints have nothing of. It is certainly a kind of underſtanding, apprehending or diſcerning of divine things, that natural men have nothing of, which the apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* It is certainly a kind of ſeeing or diſcerning ſpiritual things peculiar to the ſaints, which is ſpoken of, 1 John iii. 6. *Whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him.* 3 John 11. *He that doth evil, hath not ſeen God.* And John vi. 40. *This is the will*

*will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life.* Chap. xiv. 19. *The world ſeeth me no more; but ye ſee me.* Chap. xvii. 3. *This is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Matth. xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* John xii. 45. *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me.* Pſal. ix. 10. *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee.* Phil. iii. 8. *I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord:*——ver. 10. *That I may know him.*—And innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which ſhew the ſame. And that there is ſuch a thing as an underſtanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an underſtanding of divine things, which the ſcripture calls ſpiritual underſtanding; Col. i. 9. *We do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding.* It has been already ſhown, that that which is *ſpiritual*, in the ordinary uſe of the word in the New Teſtament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the ſubjects of.

From hence it may be ſurely inferred, wherein ſpiritual underſtanding conſiſts. For if there be in the ſaints a kind of apprehenſion or perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverſe from all that natural men have, or that it is poſſible they ſhould have, until they have a new nature; it muſt conſiſt in their having a certain kind of ideas or ſenſations of mind, which are ſimply diverſe from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the ſame thing as to ſay, that it conſiſts in the ſenſations of a new ſpiritual ſenſe, which the ſouls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again obſerved. But I have already ſhown what that new ſpiritual ſenſe is, which the ſaints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have ſhown that the immediate object of it is the ſupreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themſelves. And this is agreeable to the ſcripture: the apoſtle very plainly teaches, that the great thing diſcovered by ſpiritual light, and underſtood by ſpiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. *But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: in whom the god of this world hath*

*blinded the minds of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto him:* together with ver. 6. *For God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* And chap. iii. 18. preceding, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* And it muſt needs be ſo, for as has been before obſerved, the ſcripture often teaches, that all true religion ſummarily conſiſts in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of underſtanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, muſt be the knowledge of the *lovelineſs of divine things.* For doubtleſs, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of *love*, is the knowledge of *lovelineſs.* What that beauty or lovelineſs of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a ſpiritual ſenſe of mind, was ſhewed under the laſt head inſiſted on, *viz.* That it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or ſenſe of this, that ſpiritual underſtanding does more immediately and primarily conſiſt. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing elſe; for (as has been ſhown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things, beſides the beauty of their moral excellency, and thoſe properties and qualities of divine things which this beauty is the foundation of, but what natural men and devils can ſee and know, and will know fully and clearly to all eternity.

From what has been ſaid, therefore, we come neceſſarily to this concluſion, concerning that wherein ſpiritual underſtanding conſiſts; *viz.* That it conſiſts in *a ſenſe of the heart, of the ſupreme beauty and ſweetneſs of the holineſs or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that diſcerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from ſuch a ſenſe.*

Spiritual underſtanding conſiſts primarily in *a ſenſe of heart of that ſpiritual beauty.* I ſay, a *ſenſe of heart*; for it is not ſpeculation merely that is concerned in this kind of underſtanding; nor can there be a clear diſtinction made between the two faculties of underſtanding and will, as acting diſtinctly and ſeparately, in this matter. When the mind is ſenſible of the ſweet beauty and amiableneſs of a thing, that implies a ſenſibleneſs of ſweetneſs and delight in the preſence of the idea of it: and this ſenſibleneſs of the amiableneſs or delightfulneſs of beauty, carries in the very nature of it, *the ſenſe*

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*of the heart*; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of, taste, inclination and will.

There is a distinction to be made between a mere *notional understanding*, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and *the sense of the heart*, wherein the mind does not only *speculate* and *behold*, but *relishes* and *feels*. That sort of knowledge, by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that, by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge; the other sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of instruction in it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt of it.

The apostle seems to make a distinction between mere speculative knowledge of the things of religion, and spiritual knowledge, in calling that *the form of knowledge, and of the truth*; Rom. ii. 20 *Which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*. The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting; 2 Cor. ii. 14 *Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place*. Matth. xvi. 23. *Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men*. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have* tasted *that the Lord is gracious*. Cant. i. 3. *Because of the* savour *of thy good ointments, thy name* is as ointment poured forth, *therefore do the virgins love thee*: compared with 1 John ii. 20. *But ye have an* unction *from the holy One, and ye know all things*.

Spiritual understanding *primarily* consists in this *sense, or taste of the moral beauty of divine things*; so that no knowledge can be called spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But *secondarily*, it includes *all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, which depends upon, and flows from such a sense*.

When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness or true moral good that is in divine things, is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its view. This shews the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining

taining to the divine Being. For as was obſerved before, the beauty of all ariſes from God's moral perfection. This ſhews the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is the ſpecial glory of them, that God's holineſs, righteouſneſs, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs are ſo manifeſted in them; and without theſe moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and ſkill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the ſpecial end of all the works of God's hands. By this ſenſe of the moral beauty of divine things, is underſtood the ſufficiency of Chriſt as a Mediator: for it is only by the diſcovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Chriſt, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his perſon, ſo as to know any thing more of it than the devils do: and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Chriſt's perſon, that any know his ſufficiency as a Mediator; for the latter depends upon, and ariſes from the former. It is by ſeeing the excellency of Chriſt's perſon, that the ſaints are made ſenſible of the preciouſneſs of his blood, and its ſufficiency to atone for ſin: for therein conſiſts the preciouſneſs of Chriſt's blood, that it is the blood of ſo excellent and amiable a perſon. And on this depends the meritoriouſneſs of his obedience, and ſufficiency and prevalence of his interceſſion. By this ſight of the moral beauty of divine things, is ſeen the beauty of the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; for that conſiſts in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully ſhines forth in every ſtep of this method of ſalvation, from beginning to end. By this is ſeen the fitneſs and ſuitableneſs of this way; for this wholly conſiſts in its tendency to deliver us from ſin and hell, and to bring us to the happineſs which conſiſts in the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of moral good, in a way ſweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way's being contrived ſo as to attain theſe ends, conſiſts the excellent wiſdom of that way. By this is ſeen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and ſweetneſs in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeleſs, taſteleſs thing. By this is ſeen the true foundation of our duty, the worthineſs of God to be ſo eſteemed, honoured, loved, ſubmitted to, and ſerved, as he requires of us, and the amiableneſs of the duties themſelves that are required of us. And by this is ſeen the true evil of ſin: for he who ſees the beauty of holineſs, muſt neceſſarily ſee the hateſulneſs of ſin, its contrary. By this men underſtand the true glory of heaven, which conſiſts in the beauty and happineſs that is in holineſs. By this is ſeen the amiableneſs and happineſs

happineſs of both ſaints and angels. He that ſees the beauty of holineſs, or true moral good, ſees the greateſt and moſt important thing in the world, which is the fulneſs of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worſe than nothing. Unleſs this is ſeen, nothing is ſeen that is worth the ſeeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unleſs this be underſtood, nothing is underſtood that is worthy of the exerciſe of the noble faculty of underſtanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of divinity, (if I may ſo ſpeak), the good of the infinite fountain of good; without which God himſelf (if that were poſſible to be) would be an infinite evil; without which, we ourſelves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the ſhadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the apoſtle calls it. Well therefore may the ſcripture repreſent thoſe who are deſtitute of that ſpiritual ſenſe, by which is perceived the beauty of holineſs, as totally blind, deaf, and ſenſeleſs, yea, dead. And well may regeneration, in which this divine ſenſe is given to the ſoul by its Creator, be repreſented as opening the blind eyes, and raiſing the dead, and bringing a perſon into a new world. For if what has been ſaid be conſidered, it will be manifeſt, that when a perſon has this ſenſe and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he *knew* all things *after the fleſh, yet henceforth he will know them ſo no more;* and *he is become a new creature, old things are paſſed away, behold, all things are become new;* agreeable to 2 Cor. v. 16. 17.

And beſides the things that have been already mentioned, there ariſes from this ſenſe of ſpiritual beauty, all true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itſelf as it were a new world of knowledge. He that ſees not the beauty of holineſs, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is deſtitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exerciſes of ſoul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the ſaving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and ſo is ignorant of the greateſt works of God, the moſt important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; and alſo is wholly ignorant of the ſaints as ſaints, he knows not what they are; and in effect is ignorant of the whole ſpiritual world.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that ſpiritual ſupernatural ſenſe which has been ſpoken of, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect

imperfect degree, in which this ſenſe is commonly given at firſt, or the ſmall degree of this glorious light that firſt dawns upon the ſoul; the change made by this ſpiritual opening of the eyes in converſion, would be much greater, and more remarkable every way, than if a man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four ſenſes, ſhould continue ſo a long time, and then at once ſhould have the ſenſe of ſeeing imparted to him, in the midſt of the clear light of the ſun, diſcovering a world of viſible objects. For though ſight be more noble than any of the other external ſenſes, yet this ſpiritual ſenſe which has been ſpoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of diſcerning that a man naturally has, and the object of this ſenſe infinitely greater and more important.

This ſort of underſtanding or knowledge, is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections do proceed; by which therefore all affections are to be tried. Thoſe affections that ariſe wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do reſult from any other kind of apprehenſions of mind, are vain †.

From what has been ſaid, may be learned wherein the moſt eſſential difference lies between that light or underſtanding which is given by the common influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of natural men, and that ſaving inſtruction which is given to the ſaints. The latter primarily and moſt eſſen-

† "Take heed of contenting yourſelves with every kind of knowledge. Do not worſhip every image of your own heads; eſpecially you that fall ſhort of truth, or the knowledge of it. For when you have ſome, there may be yet that wanting, which may make you ſincere. There are many men of great knowledge, able to teach themſelves, and others too; and yet their hearts are unſound. How comes this to paſs? Is it becauſe they have ſo much light? No; but becauſe they want much. And therefore content not yourſelves with every knowledge. There is ſome knowledge which men have by the light of nature, (which leaves them without excuſe), from the book of creation; ſome by power of education; ſome by the light of the law, whereby men know their ſin and evils; ſome by the letter of the goſpel; and ſo men may know much, and ſpeak well; and ſo in ſeeing, ſee not: ſome by the Spirit, and may ſee much, ſo as to prophecy in Chriſt's name, and yet bid depart, Matth. vii. Now there is *a light of glory*, whereby the elect ſee things in another manner: to tell you how, they cannot: it is the beginning of light in heaven: and the ſame Spirit that fills Chriſt, filling their minds, that they know, by this anointing, all things: which if ever you have, you muſt become babes and fools in your own eyes. God will never write his law in your minds, until all the ſcribblings of it are blotted out. Account all your knowledge loſs for the gaining of this. It is ſad to ſee many a man pleaſing himſelf in his own dreaming deluſions; yet the poor creature in ſeeing, ſees not; which is God's heavy curſe upon men under greateſt means, and which lays all waſte and deſolate." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 147.

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tially lies in beholding the holy beauty that is in divine things; which is the only *true* moral good, and which the soul of fallen man is by nature totally blind to. The former consists only in a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know, in some measure, by the alone ordinary exercise of their faculties. And this knowledge consists only in the knowledge of those things pertaining to religion, which are *natural*. Thus for instance, in those awakenings and convictions of conscience, that natural men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no knowledge of the true *moral* beauty which is in divine things; but only assists the mind to a clearer idea of the guilt of sin, or its relation to a punishment, and connection with the *evil of suffering*, (without any sight of its true *moral* evil, or odiousness as sin), and a clearer idea of the *natural* perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy beauty and glory, but his awful and terrible greatness. It is a clear sight of this, that will fully awaken the consciences of wicked men at the day of judgement, *without any spiritual light*. And it is a lesser degree of the same, that awakens the consciences of natural men, *without spiritual light*, in this world. The same discoveries are in some measure given in the conscience of an awakened sinner in this world, which will be given more fully in the consciences of sinners at the day of judgement. The same kind of sight or apprehension of God, in a lesser degree, makes awakened sinners in this world sensible of the dreadful guilt of sin, against so great and terrible a God, and sensible of its amazing punishment, and fills them with fearful apprehensions of divine wrath; that will thoroughly convince all wicked men, of the infinitely dreadful nature and guilt of sin, and astonish them with apprehensions of wrath, when Christ shall come in the glory of his power and majesty, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And in those common illuminations, which are sometimes given to natural men, exciting in them some kind of religious desire, love and joy, the mind is only assisted to a clearer apprehension of the *natural good* that is in divine things. Thus sometimes, under common illuminations, men are raised with the ideas of the natural good that is in heaven; as its outward glory, its ease, its honour and advancement, a being there the objects of the high favour of God, and the great respect of men and angels, *&c.* So there are many things exhibited in the gospel, concerning God and Christ, and the way of salvation, that have a *natural* good in them, which suits the natural principle

ciple of self-love. Thus in that great goodness of God to sinners, and the wonderful dying love of Christ, there is a natural good, which all men love, as they love themselves; as well as a spiritual and holy beauty, which is seen only by the regenerate. Therefore there are many things appertaining to the word of God's grace delivered in the gospel, which may cause natural men, when they hear it, *anon with joy to receive it*. All that love which natural men have to God, and Christ, and Christian virtues, and good men, is not from any sight of the amiableness of the holiness, or true *moral* excellency of these things; but only for the sake of the *natural* good there is in them. All natural mens hatred of sin, is as much from principles of nature, as mens hatred of a tyger for his rapaciousness, or their aversion to a serpent for his poison and hurtfulness: and all their love of Christian virtue, is from no higher principle than their love of a man's good nature, which appears amiable to natural men; but no otherwise than silver and gold appears amiable in the eyes of a merchant, or than the blackness of the soil is beautiful in the eyes of the farmer.

From what has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, it appears, that spiritual understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal knowledge, or in having suggested to the mind any new proposition, not before read or heard of: for it is plain, that this suggesting of new propositions, is a thing entirely diverse from giving the mind a new taste or relish of beauty and sweetness *. It is also evident, that spiritual knowledge does not consist in any new doctrinal explanation of any part of the scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal knowledge, or the knowledge of propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any part of scripture, is only giving us to understand, what are the propositions contained or taught in that part of scripture.

Hence it appears, that the *spiritual understanding* of the scripture, does not consist in opening to the mind the mystical meaning of the scripture, in its parables, types and allegories; for this is only a doctrinal explication of the scripture. He that ex-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1. says, "It is not the office of the Spirit that is promised us, to make new and before unheard-of revelations, or to coin some new kind of doctrine, which tends to draw us away from the received doctrine of the gospel; but to seal and confirm to us that very doctrine which is by the gospel." And in the same place he speaks of some, that in those days maintained the contrary notion, *pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as persons that were governed by a most haughty self conceit; and not so properly to be looked upon as only labouring under a mistake, as driven by a sort of raving madness.*

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plains what is meant by the ſtony ground, and the ſeed's ſpringing up ſuddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what propoſitions or doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by Jacob's ladder, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it, or what was typified by Joſhua's leading Iſrael through Jordan, only ſhews what propoſitions are hid in theſe paſſages. And many men can explain theſe types, who have no ſpiritual knowledge. It is poſſible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of ſpiritual light in his mind; becauſe he may not have the leaſt degree of that ſpiritual ſenſe of the holy beauty of divine things which has been ſpoken of, and may ſee nothing of this kind of glory in any thing contained in any of theſe myſteries, or any other part of the ſcripture. It is plain, by what the apoſtle ſays, that a man might underſtand all ſuch myſteries, and have no ſaving grace; 1 Cor xiii. 2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* They therefore are very fooliſh, who are exalted in an opinion of their own ſpiritual attainments, from notions that come into their minds, of the myſtical meaning of theſe and thoſe paſſages of ſcripture, as though it was a ſpiritual underſtanding of theſe paſſages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their affections highly raiſed: and what has been ſaid, ſhews the vanity of ſuch affections.

From what has been ſaid, it is alſo evident, that it is not ſpiritual knowledge, for perſons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately ſuggeſted to their minds, that ſuch and ſuch outward actions or deeds are the will of God. If we ſuppoſe that it is truly God's manner thus to ſignify his will to his people, by immediate inward ſuggeſtions, ſuch ſuggeſtions have nothing of the nature of ſpiritual light. Such kind of knowledge would only be one kind of doctrinal knowledge: a propoſition concerning the will of God, is as properly a doctrine of religion, as a propoſition concerning the nature of God, or a work of God: and an having either of theſe kinds of propoſitions, or any other propoſition, declared to a man, either by ſpeech, or inward ſuggeſtion, differs vaſtly from an having the holy beauty of divine things manifeſted to the ſoul, wherein ſpiritual knowledge does moſt eſſentially conſiſt. Thus there was no ſpiritual light in Balaam; though he had the will of God immediately ſuggeſted to him by the Spirit of God from

time to time, concerning the way that he ſhould go, and what he ſhould do and ſay.

It is manifeſt therefore, that a being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and ſpiritual *leading of the Spirit of God*, which is peculiar to the ſaints, and a diſtinguiſhing mark of the ſons of God, ſpoken of Rom. viii 14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the ſons of God.* Gal. v. 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

And if perſons have the will of God concerning their actions, ſuggeſted to them by ſome text of ſcripture, ſuddenly and extraordinarily brought to their minds, which text, as the words lay in the Bible before they came to their minds, related to the action and behaviour of ſome other perſon, but they ſuppoſe, as God ſent the words to them, he intended ſomething further by them, and meant ſuch a particular action of theirs; I ſay, if perſons ſhould have the will of God thus ſuggeſted to them with texts of ſcripture, it alters not the caſe. The ſuggeſtion being accompained with an apt text of ſcripture, does not make the ſuggeſtion to be of the nature of ſpiritual inſtruction. As for inſtance, if a perſon in New-England, on ſome occaſion, were at a loſs whether it was his duty to go into ſome popiſh or heatheniſh land, where he was like to be expoſed to many difficulties and dangers, and ſhould pray to God that he would ſhew him the way of his duty; and after earneſt prayer, ſhould have thoſe words which God ſpake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. ſuddenly and extraordinarily brought to his mind, as if they were ſpoken to him; *Fear not to go down into Egypt; and I will go with thee; and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up again.* In which words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his mind, they related only to Jacob, and his behaviour; yet he ſuppoſes that God has a further meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be underſtood in a new ſenſe, that by Egypt is to be underſtood this particular country he has in his mind, and that the action intended is his going thither, and that the meaning of the promiſe is, that God would bring him back into New-England again. There is nothing of the nature of a ſpiritual or gracious leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the nature of ſpiritual underſtanding in it. Thus to underſtand texts of ſcripture, is not to have a ſpiritual underſtanding of them. Spiritually to underſtand the ſcripture, is rightly to underſtand what *is in* the ſcripture, and what *was in* it before it was underſtood; it is to underſtand rightly, what *uſed to be contained in* the meaning of it, and not the making a new meaning. When the mind is enlightened

enlightened ſpiritually and rightly to underſtand the ſcripture, it is enabled to ſee that in the ſcripture, which before was not ſeen, *by reaſon of blindneſs*. But if it was by reaſon of blindneſs, that is an evidence that the ſame meaning was in it before, otherwiſe it would have been no blindneſs not to ſee it; it is no blindneſs not to ſee a meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the eyes to underſtand the ſcripture, is *to open the eyes*, Pſal. cxix. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*; which argues, that the reaſon why the ſame was not ſeen in the ſcripture before, was, that the eyes were *ſhut*; which would not be the caſe, if the meaning that is now underſtood was not there before, but is now newly added to the ſcripture, by the manner of the ſcripture's coming to my mind. This making a new meaning to the ſcripture, is the ſame thing as making a new ſcripture; it is properly adding to the word, which is threatened with ſo dreadful a curſe. Spiritually to underſtand the ſcripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful ſpiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever ſince it was written; to behold the amiable and bright manifeſtations of the divine perfections, and of the excellency and ſufficiency of Chriſt, and the excellency and ſuitableneſs of the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, and the ſpiritual glory of the precepts and promiſes of the ſcripture, *&c.*; which things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been ſeen before, if it had not been for blindneſs, without having any new ſenſe added, by the words being ſent by God to a particular perſon, and ſpoken anew to him, with a new meaning.

And as to a gracious *leading of the Spirit*, it conſiſts in two things; partly in *inſtructing* a perſon in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully *inducing* him to comply with that inſtruction. But ſo far as the gracious leading of the Spirit lies in inſtruction, it conſiſts in a perſon's being guided by a ſpiritual and diſtinguiſhing taſte of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have ſhewn that ſpiritual knowledge primarily conſiſts in a taſte or reliſh of the amiableneſs and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy reliſh is a thing that diſcerns and diſtinguiſhes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reaſoning. As he who has a true reliſh of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it; he ſtands in no need of a train of reaſoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he ſees be a beautiful

countenance or no; he needs nothing, but only the glance of his eye. He who has a rectified musical ear, knows whether the sound he hears be true harmony; he does not need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician, about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate, knows what is good food, as soon as he tastes it, without the reasoning of a physician about it. There is a holy beauty and sweetness in words and actions, as well as a natural beauty in countenances and sounds, and sweetness in food; Job xii. 11. *Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste his meat?* When a holy and amiable action is suggested to the thoughts of a holy soul; that soul, if in the lively exercise of its spiritual taste, at once sees a beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it. On the contrary, if an unworthy unholy action be suggested to it, its sanctified eye sees no beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its sanctified taste relishes no sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yea, its holy taste and appetite leads it to think of that which is truly lovely, and naturally suggests it; as a healthy taste and appetite naturally suggests the idea of its proper object. Thus a holy person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy taste, and disposition of heart; whereby, in the lively exercise of grace, he easily distinguishes good and evil, and knows at once what is a suitable amiable behaviour towards God, and towards man, in this case and the other; and judges what is right, as it were spontaneously, and of himself, without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the Pharisees, that they *did not, even of their own selves, judge what was right*, without needing miracles to prove it, Luke xii. 57. The apostle seems plainly to have respect to this way of judging of spiritual beauty, in Rom. xii. 2. *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.*

There is such a thing as *good taste* of *natural* beauty, (which learned men often speak of), that is exercised about *temporal* things, in judging of them; as about the justness of a speech, the goodness of style, the beauty of a poem, the gracefulness of deportment, &c. A late great philosopher of our nation, writes thus upon it *; "To have *a taste*, is to give things "their real value, to be touched with the good, to be shocked "with the ill; not to be dazzled with false lustres, but in

* Chambers's dictionary, under the word TASTE.

"spight

" ſpight of all colours, and every thing that might deceive " or amuſe, to judge ſoundly. *Taſte* and *judgement* then, " ſhould be the ſame thing; and yet it is eaſy to diſcern a " difference. The *judgement* forms its opinions from reflec- " tion: the reaſon on this occaſion fetches a kind of circuit, " to arrive at its end; it ſuppoſes principles, it draws conſe- " quences, and it judges; but not without a thorough know- " ledge of the caſe; ſo that after it has pronounced, it is rea- " dy to render a reaſon of its decrees. *Good taſte* obſerves " none of theſe formalities; ere it has time to conſult, it has " taken its ſide; as ſoon as ever the object is preſented it, " the impreſſion is made, the ſentiment formed, aſk no more " of it. As the ear is wounded with a harſh ſound, as the " ſmell is ſoothed with an agreeable odour, before ever the " reaſon have meddled with thoſe objects to judge of them, " ſo the *taſte* opens itſelf at once, and prevents all reflection. " They may come afterwards to confirm it, and diſcover the " ſecret reaſons of its conduct; but it was not in its power to " wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at " all, and what pains ſoever it uſes, cannot diſcover what it was " determined it to think as it did. This conduct is very dif- " ferent from that the *judgement* obſerves in its deciſions: " unleſs we chuſe to ſay, that *good taſte* is as it were a firſt " motion, or a kind of inſtinct of right reaſon, which hurries " on with rapidity, and conducts more ſecurely, than all the " reaſonings ſhe could make; it is a firſt glance of the eye, " which diſcovers to us the nature and relations of things in a " moment."

Now as there is ſuch a kind of *taſte* of the mind as this, which philoſophers ſpeak of, whereby perſons are guided in their judgement, of the natural beauty, gracefulneſs, propriety, nobleneſs and ſublimity of ſpeeches and actions, whereby they judge as it were by the glance of the eye, or by inward ſenſation, and the firſt impreſſion of the object; ſo there is likewiſe ſuch a thing as a *divine taſte*, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the ſaints, whereby they are in like manner led and guided in diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing the true ſpiritual and holy beauty of actions; and that more eaſily, readily, and accurately, as they have more or leſs of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus *the ſons of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their behaviour in the world.*

A holy diſpoſition and ſpiritual taſte, where grace is ſtrong and lively, will enable a ſoul to determine what actions are right and becoming Chriſtians, not only more ſpeedily, but far

far more exactly, than the greateſt abilities without it. This may be illuſtrated by the manner in which ſome habits of mind, and diſpoſitions of heart, of a nature inferior to true grace, will teach and guide a man in his actions. As for inſtance, if a man be a very good natured man, his good nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongſt mankind, and will direct him, on every occaſion, to thoſe ſpeeches and actions, which are agreeable to rules of goodneſs, than the ſtrongeſt reaſon will a man of a moroſe temper. So if a man's heart be under the influence of an entire friendſhip, and moſt endeared affection to another; though he be a man of an indifferent capacity, yet this habit of his mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a ſpeech and deportment, or manner of behaviour, which ſhall in all reſpects be ſweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent diſpoſition of heart, than the greateſt capacity without it. He has as it were a ſpirit within him, that guides him; the habit of his mind is attended with a taſte, by which he immediately reliſhes that air and mien which is benevolent, and diſreliſhes the contrary, and cauſes him to diſtinguiſh between one and the other *in a moment*, more preciſely, than the moſt accurate reaſonings can find out *in many hours*. As the nature and inward tendency of a ſtone, or other heavy body, that is let fall from a loft, ſhews the way to the centre of the earth, more exactly in an inſtant, than the ableſt mathematician, without it, could determine, by his moſt accurate obſervations, in a whole day. Thus it is that a ſpiritual diſpoſition and taſte teaches and guides a man in his behaviour in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable diſpoſition, will direct a perſon of mean capacity to ſuch a behaviour, as is agreeable to Chriſtian rules of Humility, meekneſs and charity, far more readily and preciſely, than the moſt diligent ſtudy, and elaborate reaſonings, of a man of the ſtrongeſt faculties, who has not a Chriſtian ſpirit within him. So alſo will a ſpirit of love to God, and holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in God, and an heavenly diſpoſition, teach and guide a man in his behaviour.

It is an exceeding difficult thing for a wicked man, deſtitute of Chriſtian principles in his heart, to guide him, to know how to demean himſelf like a Chriſtian, with the life, and beauty, and heavenly ſweetneſs of a truly holy, humble, Chriſt-like behaviour. He knows not how to put on theſe garments; neither do they fit him; Eccl. x. 2. 3. *A wiſe man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left. Yea alſo, when he*

*he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wiſdom faileth him, and he ſaith to every one that he is a fool:* with ver. 15. *The labour of the fooliſh wearieth every one of them, becauſe he knoweth not how to go to the city.* Prov. x. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable.* Chap. xv. 2. *The tongue of the wiſe uſeth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out fooliſhneſs.* And chap. xvi. 23. *The heart of the righteous teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.*

The ſaints in thus judging of actions by a ſpiritual taſte, have not a particular recourſe to the expreſs rules of God's word, with reſpect to every word and action that is before them, the good or evil of which they thus judge of: but yet their taſte itſelf in general, is ſubject to the rule of God's word, and muſt be tried by that, and a right reaſoning upon it As a man of a rectified palate judges of particular morſels by his taſte; but yet his palate itſelf muſt be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain rules and reaſons. But a ſpiritual taſte of ſoul, mightily helps the ſoul, in its reaſonings on the word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules; as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, and naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, caſts a light on the word of God, and cauſes the true meaning, moſt naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the diſpoſition and reliſh of a ſanctified ſoul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's word. Yea, this harmony tends to bring the texts themſelves to mind, on proper occaſions; as the particular ſtate of the ſtomach and palate, tends to bring ſuch particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that ſtate. Thus *the children of God are led by the Spirit of God* in judging of actions themſelves, and in their meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy word: and ſo God *teaches them his ſtatutes, and cauſes them to underſtand the way of his precepts;* which the pſalmiſt ſo often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceeding diverſe from that which ſome call ſo; which conſiſts not in teaching them God's ſtatutes and precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward ſpeech or ſuggeſtion; and has in it no taſting the true excellency of things, or judging or diſcerning the nature of things at all. They do not determine what is the will of God by any taſte or reliſh, or any manner of judgement of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; there is no ſuch thing as any judgement or wiſdom in the caſe. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children,

children, is imparted that true wiſdom, and holy diſcretion, ſo often ſpoken of in the word of God; which is high above the other way, as the ſtars are higher than a glow-worm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who ſometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been ſaid of the nature of ſpiritual underſtanding, as conſiſting moſt eſſentially in a divine ſupernatural ſenſe and reliſh of the heart, not only ſhews that there is nothing of it in this falſely ſuppoſed *leading of the Spirit*, which has been now ſpoken of; but alſo ſhows the difference between ſpiritual underſtanding, and all kinds and forms of enthuſiaſm, all imaginary ſights of God and Chriſt and heaven, all ſuppoſed witneſſing of the Spirit, and teſtimonies of the love of God by immediate inward ſuggeſtion; and all impreſſions of future events, and immediate revelations of any ſecret facts whatſoever; all enthuſiaſtical impreſſions and applications of words of ſcripture, as though they were words now immediately ſpoken by God to a particular perſon, in a new meaning, and carrying ſomething more in them, than the words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all interpretations of the myſtical meaning of the ſcripture, by ſuppoſed immediate revelation. None of theſe things conſiſt in a divine ſenſe and reliſh of the *heart*, of the holy beauty and excellency of divine things; nor have they any thing to do with ſuch a ſenſe; but all conſiſt in impreſſions in the *head*; all are to be referred to the head of *impreſſions on the imagination*, and conſiſt in the exciting external ideas in the mind, either in ideas of outward ſhapes and colours, or words ſpoken, or letters written, or ideas of things external and ſenſible, belonging to actions done, or events accompliſhed or to be accompliſhed. An enthuſiaſtical ſuppoſed manifeſtation of the love of God, is made by the exciting an idea of a ſmiling countenance, or ſome other pleaſant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleaſant words ſpoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or ſome pleaſant bodily ſenſation. So when perſons have an imaginary revelation of ſome ſecret fact, it is by exciting external ideas; either of ſome words, implying a declaration of that fact, or ſome viſible or ſenſible circumſtances of ſuch a fact. So the ſuppoſed leading of the Spirit, to do the will of God, in outward behaviour, is either by exciting the idea of words (which are outward things) in their minds, either the words of ſcripture, or other words, which they look upon as an immediate command of God; or elſe by exciting and impreſſing ſtrongly the ideas of the outward actions themſelves.

So

So when an interpretation of a ſcripture type or allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary way, ſtrongly ſuggeſted, it is by ſuggeſting words, as though one ſecretly whiſpered and told the meaning; or by exciting other ideas in the imagination.

Such ſort of experiences and diſcoveries as theſe commonly raiſe the affections of ſuch as are deluded by them, to a great height, and make a mighty uproar in both ſoul and body. And a very great part of the falſe religion that has been in the world, from one age to another, conſiſts in ſuch diſcoveries as theſe, and in the affections that flow from them. In ſuch things conſiſted the experiences of the ancient Pythagoreans among the Heathen, and many others among them, who had ſtrange ecſtaſies and raptures, and pretended to a divine *afflatus*, and immediate revelations from heaven. In ſuch things as theſe ſeem to have conſiſted the experiences of the Eſſenes, an ancient ſect among the Jews, at, and after the times of the apoſtles. In ſuch things as theſe conſiſted the experiences of many of the ancient Gnoſtics, and the Montaniſts, and many other ſects of ancient heretics, in the primitive ages of the Chriſtian church. And in ſuch things as theſe conſiſted the pretended immediate converſe, with God and Chriſt, and ſaints and angels of heaven, of the Monks, Anchorites, and Recluſes, that formerly abounded in the church of Rome. In ſuch things conſiſted the pretended high experiences, and great ſpirituality of many ſects of enthuſiaſts, that ſwarmed in the world after the reformation; ſuch as the Anabaptiſts, Antinomians, and Familiſts, the followers of N. Stork, Th. Muncer, Jo. Becold, Henry Pfeifer, David George, Caſper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eiſlebius; and the many wild enthuſiaſts that were in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the followers of Mrs Hutchiſon, in New-England; as appears by the particular and large accounts given of all theſe ſects, by that eminently holy man, Mr Samuel Rutherford, in his *Diſplay of the ſpiritual Antichriſt*. And in ſuch things as theſe conſiſted the experiences of the late French prophets, and their followers. And in theſe things ſeems to lie the religion of the many kinds of enthuſiaſts of the preſent day. It is by ſuch ſort of religion as this chiefly that Satan transforms himſelf into an angel of light: and it is that which he has ever moſt ſucceſsfully made uſe of to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion, from the beginning of the Chriſtian church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious work, then the old ſerpent, as faſt as poſſible, and by all

means introduces this baſtard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time ſoon brought all things into confuſion. The pernicious conſequence of it is not eaſily imagined or conceived of, until we ſee and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the diſmal deſolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this baſtard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's baſtard Ahimelech did, who never left until he had ſlain all his threeſcore and ten true born ſons, excepting one, that was forced to flee. Great and ſtrict therefore ſhould be the watch and guard that miniſters maintain againſt ſuch things, eſpecially at a time of great awakening: for men, eſpecially the common people, are eaſily bewitched with ſuch things; they having ſuch a glaring and gliſtering ſhew of high religion; and the devil hiding his own ſhape, and appearing as an angel of light, that men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him.

The imagination or phantaſy ſeems to be that wherein are formed all thoſe deluſions of Satan, which thoſe are carried away with, who are under the influence of falſe religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking-place, the very neſt of foul and deluſive ſpirits. It is very much to be doubted, whether the devil can come at the ſoul of man, at all to affect it, or to excite any thought or motion, or produce any effect whatſoever in it, any other way, than by the phantaſy; which is that power of the ſoul, by which it receives, and is the ſubject of the ſpecies, or ideas of outward and ſenſible things. As to the laws and means which the Creator has eſtabliſhed, for the intercourſe and communication of unbodied ſpirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what medium they manifeſt their thoughts to each other, or excite thoughts in each other. But as to ſpirits that are united to bodies, thoſe bodies God has united them to, are their medium of communication. They have no other medium of acting on other creatures, or being acted on by them, than the body. Therefore it is not to be ſuppoſed that Satan can excite any thought, or produce any effect in the ſoul of man, any otherwiſe, than by ſome motion of the animal ſpirits, or by cauſing ſome motion or alteration in ſomething which appertains to the body. There is this reaſon to think that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the ſoul immediately, or any other way than by the medium of the body, *viz.* that he cannot immediately ſee or know the thoughts of the ſoul: it is abundantly declared in the ſcripture, to be peculiar to the omniſcient God to do that. But it is not likely that the devil can

*immediately*

*immediately produce* an effect, which is out of the reach of his *immediate view*. It seems unreasonable to suppose, that his immediate agency should be out of his own sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose, that any spirit or intelligent agent, should by the act of his will, produce effects, according to his understanding, or agreeable to his own thoughts, and that immediately, and yet the effects produced, be beyond the reach of his understanding, or where he can have no immediate perception or discerning at all? But if this be so, that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the animal spirits, or by the body, then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing in the soul, but by the imagination or phantasy, or by exciting external ideas. For we know that alterations in the body, do immediately excite no other sort of ideas in the mind, but external ideas, or ideas of the outward senses, or ideas which are of the same outward nature. As to reflection, abstraction, reasoning, *&c.* and those thoughts and inward motions which are the fruits of these acts of the mind, they are not the next effects of impressions on the body. So that it must be only by the imagination, that Satan has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any thing to it *. And this seems to be the reason why persons that are under the disease of melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the suggestions and temptations of Satan; that being a disease which peculiarly affects the animal spirits, and is attended with weakness of that part of the body which is the fountain of the animal spirits, even the brain, which

* "The imagination is that room of the soul, wherein the devil doth often appear. Indeed (to speak exactly), the devil hath no efficient power over the rational part of a man: he cannot change the will, he cannot alter the heart of a man. So that the utmost he can do, in tempting a man to sin, is by suasion and suggestion only. But then how doth the devil do this? Even by working upon the imagination. He observeth the temper, and bodily constitution of a man; and thereupon suggests to his fancy, and injects his fiery darts thereinto, by which the mind and will come to be wrought upon. The devil then, though he hath no imperious efficacy over thy will, yet because he can thus stir and move thy imagination, and thou being naturally destitute of grace, canst not withstand these suggestions; hence it is that any sin in thy imagination, though but in the outward works of the soul, yet doth quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this means do arise those horrible delusions, that are in many erroneous ways of religion: all is because their imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often are these diabolical delusions of the imagination, taken for the gracious operations of God's Spirit?—It is from hence that many have pretended to enthusiasms;—they leave the scriptures, and wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." *Burgess on Original Sin*, p. 369.

which is, as it were, the ſeat of the phantaſy. It is by impreſſions made on the brain, that any ideas are excited in the mind, by the motion of the animal ſpirits, or any changes made in the body. The brain being thus weakened and diſeaſed, it is leſs under the command of the higher faculties of the ſoul, and yields the more eaſily to extrinſic impreſſions, and is over-powered by the diſordered motions of the animal ſpirits; and ſo the devil has greater advantage to affect the mind, by working on the imagination. And thus Satan, when he caſts in thoſe horrid ſuggeſtions into the minds of many melancholy perſons, in which they have no hand themſelves, he does it by exciting imaginary ideas, either of ſome dreadful words or ſentences, or other horrid outward ideas. And when he tempts other perſons who are not melancholy, he does it by preſenting to the imagination, in a lively and alluring manner, the objects of their luſts, or by exciting ideas of words, and ſo by them exciting thoughts; or by promoting an imagination of outward actions, events, circumſtances, *&c.* Innumerable are the ways by which the mind might be led on to all kind of evil thoughts, by exciting external ideas in the imagination.

If perſons keep no guard at theſe avenues of Satan, by which he has acceſs to the ſoul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And eſpecially, if inſtead of guarding againſt him, they lay themſelves open to him, and ſeek and invite him, becauſe he appears as an angel of light, and counterfeits the illuminations and graces of the Spirit of God, by inward whiſpers, and immediate ſuggeſtions of facts and events, pleaſant voices, beautiful images, and other impreſſions on the imagination. There are many who are deluded by ſuch things, and are lifted up with them, and ſeek after them, that have a continued courſe of them, and can have them almoſt when they will; and eſpecially when their pride and vain-glory has moſt occaſion for them, to make a ſhew of them before company. It is with them, ſomething as it is with thoſe who are profeſſors of the art of telling where loſt things are to

The great Turretine, ſpeaking on that queſtion, *What is the power of angels?* ſays, "As to bodies, there is no doubt, but that they can do a great deal upon all ſorts of elementary and ſublunary bodies, to move them locally, and variouſly to agitate them. It is alſo certain, that they can act upon the external and internal ſenſes, to excite them, or to bind them. But as to the rational ſoul itſelf, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to God alone, who knows and ſearches the hearts, and who has them in his hands, does it alſo appertain to bow and move them whitherſoever he will. But angels can act upon the rational ſoul, only mediately, by imaginations." *Theolog. Elenct. Loc.* VII. *Queſt.* 7.

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be found, by impreſſions made on their imaginations; they laying themſelves open to the devil, he is always at hand to give them the deſired impreſſion.

Before I finiſh what I would ſay on this head of imaginations, counterfeiting ſpiritual light, and affections ariſing from them, I would renewedly (to prevent miſunderſtanding of what has been ſaid) deſire it may be obſerved, that I am far from determining, that no affections are ſpiritual which are attended with imaginary ideas. Such is the nature of man, that he can ſcarcely think of any thing intenſely, without ſome kind of outward ideas. They ariſe and interpoſe themſelves unavoidably, in the courſe of a man's thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confuſed, and are not what the mind regards. When the mind is much engaged, and the thoughts intenſe, oftentimes the imagination is more ſtrong, and the outward idea more lively, eſpecially in perſons of ſome conſtitutions of body. But there is a great difference between theſe two things, *viz. lively imaginations ariſing from ſtrong affections*, and *ſtrong affections ariſing from lively imaginations*. The former may be, and doubtleſs often is, in caſe of truly gracious affections. The affections do not ariſe from the imagination, nor have any dependence upon it; but on the contrary, the imagination is only the accidental effect, or conſequent of the affection, through the infirmity of human nature. But when the latter is the caſe, as it often is, that the affection ariſes from the imagination, and is built upon it, as its foundation, inſtead of a ſpiritual illumination or diſcovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthleſs and vain. And this is the drift of what has been now ſaid, of impreſſions on the imagination. Having obſerved this, I proceed to another mark of gracious affections.

V. Truly gracious affections are attended with a reaſonable and ſpiritual conviction of the judgement, of the reality and certainty of divine things.

This ſeems to be implied in the text that was laid as the foundation of this diſcourſe, *Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet* BELIEVING, *ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.*

All thoſe who are truly gracious perſons have a ſolid, full, thorough and effectual conviction of the truth of the great things of the goſpel; I mean, that they no longer halt between two opinions; the great doctrines of the goſpel ceaſe to be any longer doubtful things, or matters of opinion, which, though probable, are yet diſputable; but with them, they are points ſettled

settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their all upon their truth. Their conviction is an *effectual* conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel, have the *influence* of real and certain things upon them; they have the *weight* and *power* of real things in their hearts; and accordingly rule in their affections, and govern them through the course of their lives. With respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and the great things he has revealed concerning himself, and his Father, and another world, they have not only a predominating opinion that these things are true, and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful speculation; but they *see that it is really so*; their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal purposes and designs, concerning fallen man, and the glorious and everlasting things prepared for the saints in another world, they see that they are so indeed: and therefore these things are of great weight with them, and have a mighty power upon their hearts, and influence over their practice, in some measure answerable to their infinite importance.

That all true Christians have such a kind of conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, is abundantly manifest from the holy scriptures. I will mention a few places of many; Matth. xvi. 15. 16. 17. *But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona:—my Father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee.* John vi. 68. 69. *Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* John xvii. 6. 7. 8. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Acts viii. 37. *If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayst.* 2 Cor. iv. 11. 12. 13. 14. *We which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake.—Death worketh in us.—We having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* Together with ver. 16. *For which cause we faint not.* And ver. 18. *While we look*

*look not at the things which are seen*, &c. And chap. v. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God.*—And ver. 6. 7. 8. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have commited unto him against that day.* Heb. iii. 6. *Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* Heb. xi. 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:* together with that whole chapter. 1 John iv. 13. 14. 15. 16. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* Chap. v. 4. 5. *For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Therefore truly gracious affections are attended with such a kind of conviction and persuasion of the truth of the things of the gospel, and sight of their evidence and reality, as these and other scriptures speak of.

There are many religious affections, which are not attended with such a conviction of the judgement. There are many apprehensions and ideas which some have, that they call divine discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while, they may seem to be more persuaded of the truth of the things of religion, than they used to be, and may yield a forward assent, like many of Christ's hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual conviction; nor is there any great abiding change in them, in this respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great things of the gospel, now these things, with regard to reality and certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another view than they used to do. There are many persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious affections, and think they have been converted, they do not go about the world any more convinced of the truth of the gospel, than

than they uſed to be; or at leaſt, there is no remarkable alteration: they are not men who live under the influence and power of a realizing conviction of the infinite and eternal things which the goſpel reveals; if they were, it would be impoſſible for them to live as they do. Becauſe their affections are not attended with a thorough conviction of the mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a ſhow and noiſe they make, it is like the blaze of tow, or crackling of thorns, or like the forward flouriſhing blade on ſtony ground, that has no root, nor deepneſs of earth to maintain its life.

Some perſons, under high affections, and a confident perſuaſion of their good eſtate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a ſeeing the truth of the word of God, and which is very far from it, after this manner; they have ſome text of ſcripture coming to their minds, in a ſudden and extraordinary manner, immediately declaring unto them (as they ſuppoſe) that their ſins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will ſave them; and it may be have a chain of ſcriptures coming one after another, to the ſame purpoſe; and they are convinced that it is truth; *i. e.* they are confident that it is certainly ſo, that their ſins are forgiven, and God does love them, *&c.*—; they ſay they know it is ſo; and when the words of ſcripture are ſuggeſted to them, and as they ſuppoſe immediately ſpoken to them by God, in this meaning, they are ready to cry out, *Truth, truth! it is certainly ſo! the word of God is true!* And this they call a ſeeing the truth of the word of God. Whereas the whole of their faith amounts to no more, than only a ſtrong confidence of their own good eſtate, and ſo a confidence that thoſe words are true, which they ſuppoſe tell them they are in a good eſtate: when indeed (as was ſhown before) there is no ſcripture which declares that any perſon is in a good eſtate directly, or any other way than by conſequence. So that this, inſtead of being a real ſight of the truth of the word of God, is a ſight of nothing but a phantom, and is all over a deluſion. Truly to ſee the truth of the word of God, is to ſee the truth of the goſpel; which is the glorious doctrine the word of God contains, concerning God, and Jeſus Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him, and the world of glory that he is entered into, and purchaſed for all them who believe; and not a revelation that ſuch and ſuch particular perſons are true Chriſtians, and ſhall go to heaven. Therefore thoſe affections which ariſe from no other perſuaſion of the truth of the word of God than this, ariſe from deluſion, and not true conviction; and conſequently are themſelves deluſive and vain.

But

But if the religious affections that persons have, do indeed arise from a strong persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion; their affections are not the better, unless their persuasion be a *reasonable* persuasion or conviction. By a reasonable conviction, I mean a conviction founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may have a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their persuasion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of others; as many Mahometans are strongly persuaded of the truth of the Mahometan religion, because their fathers, and neighbours, and nation believe it. That belief of the truth of the Christian religion, which is built on the very same grounds with Mahometans belief of the Mahometan religion, is the same sort of belief. And though the thing believed happens to be better; yet that does not make the belief itself to be of a better sort: for though the thing believed happens to be true, yet the belief of it is not owing to this truth, but to education. So that as the conviction is no better than the Mahometans conviction; so the affections that flow from it, are no better, in themselves, than the religious affections of Mahometans.

But if that belief of Christian doctrines, which persons affections arise from, be not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments which are offered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that their affections are truly gracious: for in order to that, it is requisite, not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a *reasonable*, but also a *spiritual* belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men do yield a kind of assent of their judgements to the truth of the Christian religion, from the rational proofs or arguments that are offered to evince it. Judas, without doubt, thought Jesus to be the Messiah, from the things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a devil. So in John ii. 23. 24. 25. we read of *many that believed in Christ's name, when they saw the miracles that he did;* whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So Simon the sorcerer believed, when he beheld the miracles and signs which were done; but yet remained *in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*, Acts viii. 13. 23. And if there is such a belief or assent of the judgement in some natural men, none can doubt but that religious affections may arise from that assent or belief; as we read of some who *believed for a while*, that were greatly affected, and *anon with joy received the word.*

It is evident that there is such a thing as a *spiritual* belief or conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, or a belief that is peculiar to those who are spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy communications, and dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that the conviction they have, does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good works; but the belief itself is diverse, the assent and conviction of the judgement is of a kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and that which natural men are wholly destitute of. This is evident by the scripture, if any thing at all is so; John xvii. 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me.* Tit. i. 1. *According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.* John xvi. 27. *The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* 1 John iv. 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Chap. v. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.*

What a *spiritual conviction* of the judgement is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former head of a *spiritual understanding.* The conviction of the judgement arises from the illumination of the understanding: the passing of a right judgement on things, depends on an having a right apprehension or idea of things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel, is such a conviction, as arises from having a spiritual view or apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the scripture, which often represents, that a saving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the mind, to have right apprehensions of the nature of those things, and so as it were unvailing things, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them and see them as they are. Luke x. 21, 22. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast* HID *these things from the wise and prudent, and hast* REVEALED *them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will* REVEAL *him.* John vi. 40. *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which* SEETH *the Son, and* BELIEVETH *on him,*

*him, may have everlasting life.* Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John xvii. 6. 7. 8. *I have* MANIFESTED *thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension and view of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself was of him, and was sent by him. Matth. xvi. 16. 17. *Simon Peter said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not* REVEALED *it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.* Gal. i. 14. 15. 16. *Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to* REVEAL *his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

If it be so, that that is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the gospel, which arises from a spiritual understanding of those things; I have shown already what that is, *viz.* a sense and taste of the divine, supreme, and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind spiritually convinced of the divinity and truth of the great things of the gospel, when that conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a sense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from things that have been already said; and for this the scripture is very plain and express: 2 Cor. iv. 3. to 6. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that* BELIEVE *not, lest the light of the* GLORIOUS GOSPEL *of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the* LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD, *in the face of Jesus Christ.* Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the* GLORY OF THE LORD, *are changed*

*into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Nothing can be more evident, than that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of, by the apostle, as arising from the mind's being enlightened to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits.

This view or sense of the divine glory, and unparallelled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity, two ways; *directly*, and more *indirectly*, and *remotely*. 1. A view of this divine glory *directly*, convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgement thus *directly* convinced and assured of the divinity of the things of the gospel, by a clear view of their divine glory, has a *reasonable* conviction; his belief and assurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is in itself, real evidence of their divinity, and the most direct and strong evidence. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity intuitively; he not only argues that they are divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists; for in this glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, does mainly consist the true notion of divinity. God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty. They therefore that see the stamp of this glory in divine things, they see divinity in them, they see God in them, and so see them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist. Thus a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but by one step, and that is its divine glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible, that there should be an excellency in divine things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that

that things that are *divine*, that appertain to the ſupreme Being, are vaſtly different from things that are *human*: that there is a God-like, high, and glorious excellency in them, that does ſo diſtinguiſh them from the things which are of men, that the difference is ineffable; and therefore ſuch, as, if ſeen, will have a moſt convincing, ſatisfying influence upon any one, that they are what they are, *viz.* divine. Doubtleſs there is that glory and excellency in the divine Being, by which he is ſo infinitely diſtinguiſhed from all other beings, that if it were ſeen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreaſonable to deny, that it is poſſible for God to give manifeſtations of this diſtinguiſhing excellency, in things by which he is pleaſed to make himſelf known; and that this diſtinguiſhing excellency may be clearly ſeen in them. There are *natural* excellencies that are very evidently diſtinguiſhing of the ſubjects or authors, to any one who beholds them. How vaſtly is the ſpeech of an underſtanding man different from that of a little child! And how greatly diſtinguiſhed is the ſpeech of ſome men of great genius, as Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addiſon, and others, from that of many other underſtanding men! There are no limits to be ſet to the degrees of manifeſtation of mental excellency, that there may be in ſpeech. But the appearances of the *natural* perfections of God, in the manifeſtations he makes of himſelf, may doubtleſs be unſpeakably more evidently diſtinguiſhing, than the appearances of thoſe excellencies of worms of the duſt, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with mankind, and their works, by viewing the ſun, may know it is no human work. And it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that when Chriſt comes at the end of the world, in the glory of his Father, it will be with ſuch ineffable appearances of divinity, as will leave no doubt to the inhabitants of the world, even the moſt obſtinate infidels, that he who appears is a divine perſon. But above all, do the manifeſtations of the *moral* and *ſpiritual* glory of the divine Being, (which is the proper beauty of the divinity), bring their own evidence, and tend to aſſure the heart. Thus the diſciples were aſſured that Jeſus was the Son of God, for *they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. When Chriſt appeared in the glory of his transfiguration to his diſciples, with that outward glory to their bodily eyes, which was a ſweet and admirable ſymbol and ſemblance of his ſpiritual glory, together with his ſpiritual glory itſelf, manifeſted to their minds; the manifeſtation of glory was ſuch, as did perfectly, and with good reaſon,

aſſure

assure them of his divinity; as appears by what one of them, *viz.* the apostle Peter, says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16. 17. 18. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty: for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.* The apostle calls that mount, *the holy mount*, because the manifestations of Christ which were there made to their minds, and which their minds were especially impressed and ravished with, was the glory of his *holiness*, or the beauty of his *moral excellency*; or, as another of these disciples, who saw it, expresses it, *His glory, as full of grace and truth.*

Now this distinguishing glory of the divine Being has its brightest appearance and manifestation, in the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, the doctrines there taught, the word there spoken, and the divine counsels, acts and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential manifestation of divine glory in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it: what should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no argument that it cannot be seen, that some do not see it; though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential excellencies in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose, that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special influence and enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon force of mind to discern the distinguishing excellencies of the works of authors of great genius: those things in Milton, which to mean judges appear tasteless and imperfections, are his inimitable excellencies in the eyes of those who are of greater discerning, and better taste. And if there be a book, which God is the author of, it is most reasonable to suppose, that the distinguishing glories of his word are of such a kind, as that the sin and corruption of mens hearts, which above all things alienates men from the Deity, and makes the heart dull and stupid to any sense or taste of those things wherein the moral glory of the divine perfections consists; I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blind men from discerning the beauties of such a book; and that therefore they will not

not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy taste, to discern and relish divine beauties.

This sense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of divine things, does also tend *directly* to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, as there are very many of the most important things declared in the gospel, that are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth of which does in effect consist in this excellency, or does so immediately depend upon it and result from it, that in this excellency's being seen, the truth of those things is seen. As soon as ever the eyes are opened to behold the holy beauty and amiableness that is in divine things, a multitude of most important doctrines of the gospel, that depend upon it, (which all appear strange and dark to natural men), are at once seen to be true. As for instance, hereby appears the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding evil of sin; for the same eye that discerns the transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding odiousness of sin: the same taste which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitterness of moral evil. And by this means a man sees his own sinfulness and loathsomeness; for he has now a sense to discern objects of this nature; and so sees the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding sinfulness of mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful pollution of his heart, and the desperate depravity of his nature, in a new manner; for his soul has now a sense given it to feel the pain of such a disease: and this shows him the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the corruption of man's nature, his original sin, and the ruinous undone condition man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty power of God to renew his heart, and change his nature. Men by seeing the true excellency of holiness, do see the glory of all those things, which both reason and scripture shew to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown, that the glory of them depend on this: and hereby they see the truth of all that the scripture declares concerning God's glorious excellency and majesty, his being the fountain of all good, the only happiness of the creature, *&c.* And this again shews the mind the truth of what the scripture teaches concerning the evil of sin against so glorious a God; and also the truth of what it teaches concerning sin's just desert of that dreadful punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the impossibility of our offering any satisfaction, or sufficient atonement for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shews the truth of what the scripture

ſcripture reveals concerning the neceſſity of a Saviour, to offer an atonement of infinite value for ſin. And this ſenſe of ſpiritual beauty that has been ſpoken of, enables the ſoul to ſee the glory of thoſe things which the goſpel reveals concerning the perſon of Chriſt; and ſo enables to ſee the exceeding beauty and dignity of his perſon, appearing in what the goſpel exhibits of his word, works, acts, and life: and this apprehenſion of the ſuperlative dignity of his perſon, ſhews the truth of what the goſpel declares concerning the value of his blood and righteouſneſs, and ſo the infinite excellency of that offering he has made to God for us, and ſo its ſufficiency to atone for our ſins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God diſcovers the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; thus the ſoul ſees the fitneſs and ſuitableneſs of this way of ſalvation, the admirable wiſdom of the contrivance, and the perfect anſwerableneſs of the proviſion that the goſpel exhibits, (as made for us), to our neceſſities. A ſenſe of true divine beauty being given to the ſoul, the ſoul diſcerns the beauty of every part of the goſpel-ſcheme. This alſo ſhews the ſoul the truth of what the word of God declares concerning man's chief happineſs, as conſiſting in holy exerciſes and enjoyments. This ſhews the truth of what the goſpel declares concerning the unſpeakable glory of the heavenly ſtate. And what the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and the writings of the apoſtles declare concerning the glory of the Meſſiah's kingdom, is now all plain; and alſo what the ſcripture teaches concerning the reaſons and grounds of our duty. The truth of all theſe things revealed in the ſcripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the ſoul, only by imparting that ſpiritual taſte of divine beauty, which has been ſpoken of; they being hidden things to the ſoul before.

And beſides all this, the truth of all thoſe things which the ſcripture ſays about experimental religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the ſoul, that one who knew the heart of man, better than we know our own hearts, and perfectly knew the nature of virtue and holineſs, was the author of the ſcriptures. And the opening to view, with ſuch clearneſs, ſuch a world of wonderful and glorious truth in the goſpel, that before was unknown, being quite above the view of a natural eye, but now appearing ſo clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible influence on the ſoul, to perſuade of the divinity of the goſpel.

Unleſs men may come to a reaſonable ſolid perſuaſion and conviction of the truth of the goſpel, by the internal evidences of it, in the way that has been ſpoken, *viz.* by a ſight of its glory;

glory; it is impoſſible that thoſe who are illiterate, and unacquainted with hiſtory, ſhould have any thorough and effectual conviction of it at all. They may without this, ſee a great deal of probability of it; it may be reaſonable for them to give much credit to what learned men, and hiſtorians tell them; and they may tell them ſo much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Chriſtian religion is true; and ſo much that they would be very unreaſonable not to entertain this opinion. But to have a conviction, ſo clear, and evident, and aſſuring, as to be ſufficient to induce them, with boldneſs to ſell all, confidently and fearleſsly to run the venture of the loſs of all things, and of enduring the moſt exquiſite and long continued torments, and to trample the world under foot, and count all things but dung for Chriſt; the evidence they can have from hiſtory, cannot be ſufficient. It is impoſſible that men, who have not ſomething of a general view of the hiſtorical world, or the ſeries of hiſtory from age to age, ſhould come at the force of arguments for the truth of Chriſtianity, drawn from hiſtory, to that degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned men have ſaid to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds; they will be ready, when pinched with ſome great trial of their faith, to ſay, "How do I know this, or that? "How do I know when theſe hiſtories were written? Learned men tell me theſe hiſtories were ſo and ſo atteſted in the "day of them; but how do I know that there were ſuch atteſtations then? They tell me there is equal reaſon to believe theſe facts, as any whatſoever that are related at ſuch "a diſtance; but how do I know that other facts which are "related of thoſe ages, ever were?" Thoſe who have not ſomething of a general view of the ſeries of hiſtorical events, and of the ſtate of mankind from age to age, cannot ſee the clear evidence from hiſtory, of the truth of facts, in diſtant ages; but there will endleſs doubts and ſcruples remain.

But the goſpel was not given only for learned men. There are at leaſt nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in an hundred, of thoſe for whom the ſcriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the ſcriptures, by ſuch arguments as learned men make uſe of. If men who have been brought up in Heathenism, muſt wait for a clear and certain conviction of the truth of Chriſtianity, until they have learning and acquaintance with the hiſtories of politer nations, enough to ſee clearly the force of ſuch kind of arguments; it will make the evidence of the

gospel, to them, immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them, infinitely difficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his people, no more than probable evidences of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care, abundantly provided, and given them, the most convincing, assuring, satisfying and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, *made a covenant, ordered in all things and sure.* Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear evidence, *that this is his covenant*, and that these promises are his promises; or which is the same thing, that the Christian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwise in vain are those great assurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and so variously establishing it by seals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some sort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there are some grounds of assurance of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give an higher persuasion, than any arguing from history, human tradition, *&c.* which the illiterate, and unacquainted with history, are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect assurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever; agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near in* FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH. And Col. ii. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto* ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: and that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect assurance of. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained,

attained, by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments fetched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose, that one in an hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel, this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, since the beginning of the reformation, and have chearfully undergone extreme tortures, in a confidence of the truth of the gospel, and consider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured persuasion, this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an assurance, from such arguments! Many of them were weak women and children, and the greater part of them illiterate persons, many of whom had been brought up in popish ignorance and darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times, wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity from antiquity and history, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these arguments have been set in a clear and convincing light, even by learned men themselves: and since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers, among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, wherein these arguments are handled to the greatest advantage.

The true martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in opinion that the gospel of Christ is true, but *those that have seen the truth of it;* as the very name of martyrs or witnesses (by which they are called in scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called witnesses of the truth of any thing, who only declare they are very much of opinion that such a thing is true. Those only are proper witnesses, who can, and do testify that they have seen the truth of the thing they assert; John iii. 11. *We speak that we do know, and* testify *that we have seen.* John i. 34. *And I* saw, *and* bare record, *that this is the Son of God.* 1 John iv. 14. *And we have* seen *and do* testify, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* Acts xxii. 14. 15. *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst* know *his will, and* see *that just One, and shouldst* hear *the voice of his mouth: for thou shalt be his* witness *unto all men, of what thou hast* seen *and* heard. But

the true martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his witnesses: and all the saints, who by their holy practice under great trials, declare that faith, *which is the* SUBSTANCE *of things hoped for, and the* EVIDENCE *of things not seen*, are called witnesses, Heb. xi. 1. and xii. 1. because by their profession and practice, they declare their assurance of the truth and divinity of the gospel, having had the eyes of their minds enlightened to see divinity in the gospel, or to behold that unparallelled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: so that they may truly be said to have seen God in it, and to have seen that it is indeed divine; and so can speak in the style of witnesses; and not only say, that *they think* the gospel is divine, but say, that *it is divine*, giving it in as their testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless Peter, James, and John, after they had seen that excellent glory of Christ in the mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to speak in the language of witnesses, and to say positively that *Jesus is the Son of God*; as Peter says, *they were eye-witnesses*, 2 Pet. i. 16. And so all nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his glory at the day of judgement; though what will be universally seen, will be only his natural glory, and not his moral and spiritual glory, which is much more distinguishing. But yet, it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual sight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great variety of degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory: but there is no true and saving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgement, of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it, of this manifestation of its internal evidence, in some degree. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a-begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself. Though great use may be made of external arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to serious consideration, and to confirm the faith of true saints; yea, they may be in some respects subservient *to the begetting* of a saving faith in men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual conviction of the judgement, but what arises from an apprehension of the spiritual beauty and glory of divine things: for, as has been observed, this apprehension or view has a tendency to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, two ways; either

either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already obſerved how it does this directly, I proceed now,

2. To obſerve how a view of this divine glory does convince the mind of the truth of Chriſtianity, more indirectly.

*Firſt*, It doth ſo, as the prejudices of the heart againſt the truth of divine things are hereby removed, ſo that the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reaſons which are offered. The mind of man is naturally full of enmity againſt the doctrines of the goſpel; which is a diſadvantage to thoſe arguments that prove their truth, and cauſes them to loſe their force upon the mind: but when a perſon has diſcovered to him the divine excellency of Chriſtian doctrines, this deſtroys that enmity, and removes the prejudices, and ſanctifies the reaſon, and cauſes it to be open and free. Hence is a vaſt difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind. Hence was the very different effect, which Chriſt's miracles had to convince the diſciples, from what they had to convince the ſcribes and Phariſees: not that they had a ſtronger reaſon, or had their reaſon more improved; but their reaſon was ſanctified, and thoſe blinding prejudices, which the ſcribes and Phariſees were under, were removed, by the ſenſe they had of the excellency of Chriſt and his doctrine.

*Secondly*, It not only removes the hindrances of reaſon, but poſitively helps reaſon. It makes even the ſpeculative notions more lively. It aſſiſts and engages the attention of the mind to that kind of objects; which cauſes it to have a clearer view of them, and more clearly to ſee their mutual relations. The ideas themſelves, which otherwiſe are dim and obſcure, by this means have a light caſt upon them, and are impreſſed with greater ſtrength, ſo that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the ſun is caſt upon them, is under greater advantage to diſcern them, in their true forms, and mutual relations, and to ſee the evidences of divine wiſdom and ſkill in their contrivance, than he that ſees them in a dim ſtar-light, or twilight.

What has been ſaid, may ſerve in ſome meaſure to ſhew the nature of a ſpiritual conviction of the judgement of the truth and reality of divine things; and ſo to diſtinguiſh truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with ſuch a conviction of the judgement.

But before I diſmiſs this head, it will be needful to obſerve the

the ways whereby ſome are deceived, with reſpect to this matter; and take notice of ſeveral things, that are ſometimes taken for a ſpiritual and ſaving belief of the truth of the things of religion, which are indeed very diverſe from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that ariſes from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and ſenſible apprehenſion of the things of religion, with reſpect to what is *natural* in them, ſuch as natural men have who are under awakenings and common illuminations, will give ſome degree of conviction of the truth of divine things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they ſee the manifeſtations there are, in the revelation made in the holy ſcriptures, and things exhibited in that revelation, of the natural perfections of God; ſuch as his greatneſs, power, and awful majeſty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there are of God's greatneſs and majeſty in his word and works, which they have a great ſenſe of, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that theſe are indeed the word and works of a very great inviſible Being. And the lively apprehenſion of the greatneſs of God, which natural men may have, tends to make them ſenſible of the great guilt, which ſin againſt ſuch a God brings, and the dreadfulneſs of his wrath for ſin. And this tends to cauſe them more eaſily and fully to believe the revelation the ſcripture makes of another world, and of the extreme miſery it threatens, there to be inflicted on ſinners. And ſo from that ſenſe of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is ſometimes given in common illuminations, men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. Theſe things perſons may have, and yet have no ſenſe of the beauty and amiableneſs of the moral and holy excellency that is in the things of religion; and therefore no ſpiritual conviction of their truth. But yet ſuch convictions are ſometimes miſtaken for ſaving convictions, and the affections flowing from them, for ſaving affections.

2. The extraordinary impreſſions which are made on the imaginations of ſome perſons, in the viſions, and immediate ſtrong impulſes and ſuggeſtions that they have, as though they ſaw ſights, and had words ſpoken to them, may, and often do beget a ſtrong perſuaſion of the truth of inviſible things. Though the

the general tendency of such things, in their final issue, is to draw men off from the word of God, and to cause them to reject the gospel, and to establish unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are revealed in the scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delusion, and so nothing worth. As for instance, if a person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings, from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced: and he may also be confident, that this is Christ whom he saw and heard speaking: and this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, *&c.*—in the same manner, as the lying miracles of the Papists, may for the present, beget in the minds of the ignorant deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the images of Christ, in Popish churches, are on some extraordinary occasions, made by priest-craft to appear to the people as if they wept, and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and such words; the people may be verily persuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and sufferings, and resurrection, and ascension, and present government of the world is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of occular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present; though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the intercourse which Satan has with witches, and their often experiencing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the Sadducees. The general tendency of Satan's influences is delusion: but yet he may mix some truth with his lies, that his lies may not be so easily discovered.

There

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impreſſions on their imagination, in the manner which has been now ſpoken of. They ſay they know that there is a God, for they have ſeen him; they know that Chriſt is the Son of God, for they have ſeen him in his glory; they know that Chriſt died for ſinners, for they have ſeen him hanging on the croſs, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have ſeen the miſery of the damned ſouls in hell, and the glory of ſaints and angels in heaven, (meaning ſome external repreſentations, ſtrongly impreſſed on their imagination); they know that the ſcriptures are the word of God, and that ſuch and ſuch promiſes in particular are his word, for they have heard him ſpeak them to them, they came to their minds ſuddenly and immediately from God, without their having any hand in it.

3. Perſons may ſeem to have their belief of the truth of the things of religion greatly increaſed, when the foundation of it is only a perſuaſion they have received, of their intereſt in them. They firſt, by ſome means or other, take up a confidence, that if there be a Chriſt in heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favour of the truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all theſe things belong to them; and hence eaſily become confident that they are true; they look upon it to be greatly for their intereſt that they ſhould be true. It is very obvious what a ſtrong influence mens intereſt and inclinations have on their judgements. While a natural man thinks, that if there be a heaven and hell; the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly perſuaded that there is a heaven or hell: but when he comes to be perſuaded, that hell belongs only to other folks, and not to him; then he can eaſily allow the reality of hell, and cry out of others ſenſeleſſneſs and ſottiſhneſs in neglecting means of eſcape from it: and being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promiſed heaven to him, he may ſeem ſtrong in the faith of its reality, and may have a great zeal againſt that infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another diſtinguiſhing ſign of gracious affections.

VI. Gracious affections are attended with *evangelical humiliation.*

Evangelical humiliation is a ſenſe that a Chriſtian has of his own

own utter inſufficiency, deſpicableneſs, and odiouſneſs, with an anſwerable frame of heart.

There is a diſtinction to be made between a *legal* and *evangelical* humiliation. The former is what men may be the ſubjects of, while they are yet in a ſtate of nature, and have no gracious affection; the latter is peculiar to true ſaints: the former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, aſſiſting natural principles, and eſpecially natural conſcience; the latter is from the ſpecial influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exerciſing ſupernatural and divine principles: the former is from the mind's being aſſiſted to a greater ſenſe of the things of religion, as to their natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, ſuch as his greatneſs, terrible majeſty, *&c.* which were manifeſted to the congregation of Iſrael, in giving the law at mount Sinai; the latter is from a ſenſe of the tranſcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities: in the former, a ſenſe of the awful greatneſs, and natural perfections of God, and of the ſtrictneſs of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding ſinful, and guilty, and expoſed to the wrath of God, as it will wicked men and devils at the day of judgement; but they do not ſee their own *odiouſneſs* on the account of ſin; they do not ſee the hateful nature of ſin; a ſenſe of this is given in *evangelical humiliation*, by a diſcovery of the beauty of God's holineſs and moral perfection. In a *legal humiliation*, men are made ſenſible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly inſufficient to help themſelves; as wicked men will be at the day of judgement: but they have not *an anſwerable frame of heart*, conſiſting in a diſpoſition to abaſe themſelves, and exalt God alone; this diſpoſition is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a diſcovery of God's holy beauty: in a legal humiliation, the conſcience is convinced; as the conſciences of all will be moſt perfectly at the day of judgement; but becauſe there is no ſpiritual underſtanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered; this is done only in evangelical humiliation. In legal humiliation, men are brought to deſpair of helping themſelves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themſelves: in the former, they are ſubdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought ſweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to proſtrate themſelves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no ſpiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humiliation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Chriſtian grace does very much conſiſt. Legal humiliation is uſeful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requiſite in order to ſpiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no *humility*; as the wicked at the day of judgement will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteouſneſs, but are altogether ſinful, and exceeding guilty, and juſtly expoſed to eternal damnation, and be fully ſenſible of their own helpleſſneſs, without the leaſt mortification of the pride of their hearts: but the eſſence of evangelical humiliation conſiſts in ſuch *humility*, as becomes a creature, in itſelf exceeding ſinful, under a diſpenſation of grace; conſiſting in a mean eſteem of himſelf, as in himſelf nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a diſpoſition to exalt himſelf, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and moſt eſſential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the goſpel, and every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's diſpenſations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to paſs this effect in the hearts of men. They that are deſtitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profeſſion they may make, and how high ſoever their religious affections may be; Hab. ii. 4. *Behold, his ſoul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the juſt ſhall live by his faith; i. e.* he ſhall live by his faith on God's righteouſneſs and grace, and not his own goodneſs and excellency. God has abundantly manifeſted in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar reſpect to in his ſaints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it; Pſal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit.* Pſal. li. 17. *The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly.* Prov. iii. 34. *He giveth grace unto the lowly.* Iſ. lvii. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Iſ. lxvi. 1. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footſtool:—but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* Micah vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man,*

*man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Matth. v. 3. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God.* Matth. xviii. 3. 4. *Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.* Mark x. 15. *Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein.* The centurion, that we have an account of Luke vii. acknowledged that *he was not worthy that Chriſt ſhould enter under his roof*, and that *he was not worthy to come to him.* See the manner of the woman's coming to Chriſt, that was a ſinner, Luke vii. 37. &c. *And behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſat at meat in the Phariſee's houſe, brought an alabaſter-box of ointment, and ſtood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.* She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman, (1 Cor. xi. 15.) too good to wipe the feet of Chriſt withal. Jeſus moſt graciouſly accepted her, and ſays to her, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace.* The woman of Canaan ſubmitted to Chriſt, in his ſaying, *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt it to dogs*, and did as it were own that ſhe was worthy to be called a dog; whereupon Chriſt ſays unto her, *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt*, Matth. xv. 26. 27. 28. The prodigal ſon ſaid, *I will ariſe, and go to my father, and I will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me as one of thy hired ſervants*, Luke xv. 18. &c. See alſo Luke xviii. 9. &c. *And he ſpake this parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others*, &c.—*The publican ſtanding afar off, would not ſo much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner. I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* Matth. xxviii. 9. *And they came, and held him by the feet, and worſhipped him.* Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the elect of God,—humbleneſs of mind.* Ezek. xx. 41. 43. *I will accept you with your ſweet ſavour, when I bring you out from the people*, &c.—*And there ſhall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye ſhall lothe*

*yourſelves in your own ſight, for all your evils that ye have committed.* Chap. xxxvi. 26. 27. 31. *A new heart alſo will I give unto you,—and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes,* &c.—*Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* Chap. xvi. 63. *That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord.* Job xlii. 6. *I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.*

As we would therefore make the holy ſcriptures our rule, in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and ſtate; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the moſt eſſential things pertaining to true Chriſtianity *. This is the principal part of the great Chriſtian duty of *ſelf-denial.* That duty conſiſts in two things, *viz. firſt,* In a man's denying his worldly inclinations, and in forſaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, *ſecondly,* In denying his natural ſelf-exaltation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himſelf; ſo that he does freely, and from his very heart, as it were renounce himſelf, and annihilate himſelf. Thus the Chriſtian doth, in evangelical humiliation. And this latter is the greateſt and moſt difficult part of ſelf-denial: although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many Anchorites and Recluſes have abandoned (though without any true mortification), the wealth, and pleaſures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteouſneſs; they never denied themſelves for Chriſt, but only ſold one luſt to feed another, ſold a beaſtly luſt to pamper a deviliſh one; and ſo were never the better, but their latter end was worſe than their beginning; they turned out one black devil, to let in ſeven white ones, that were worſe than the firſt, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpreſſible, and almoſt inconceivable,

* Calvin, in his Inſtitutions, Book II. chap. 2. § 11. ſays, 'I was always exceedingly pleaſed with that ſaying of Chryſoſtom, "The foundation of our philoſophy is humility;" and yet more pleaſed with that of Auguſtine, "As, ſays he, the rhetorician being aſked, what was the firſt thing in the rules of eloquence, he anſwered, Pronunciation; what was the ſecond, pronunciation; what was the third, ſtill he anſwered, pronunciation. So if you ſhould aſk me concerning the precepts of the Chriſtian religion, I would anſwer, firſtly, ſecondly, and thirdly, and for ever, Humility."

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how ſtrong a ſelf-righteous, ſelf-exalting diſpoſition is naturally in man; and what he will not do and ſuffer, to feed and gratify it; and what lengths have been gone in a ſeeming ſelf denial in other reſpects, by Eſſenes and Phariſees among the Jews, and by Papiſts, many ſects of heretics, and enthuſiaſts, among profeſſing Chriſtians; and by many Mahometans; and by Pythagorean philoſophers, and others, among the Heathen; and all to do ſacrifice to this Moloch of ſpiritual pride or ſelf-righteouſneſs; and that they may have ſomething wherein to exalt themſelves before God, and above their fellow-creatures.

That humiliation which has been ſpoken of, is what all the moſt glorious hypocrites, who make the moſt ſplendid ſhew of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, do groſsly fail in. Were it not that this is ſo much inſiſted on in ſcripture, as a moſt eſſential thing in true grace; one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philoſophers were truly gracious, in whom was ſo bright an appearance of many virtues, and alſo great illuminations, and inward fervours and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the ſubjects of divine illapſes and heavenly communications †. It is true, that many hypocrites make great pretences to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatſoever which they make a higher profeſſion of. They endeavour to make a

† "Albeit the Pythagoreans were thus famous for Judaic myſterious wiſdom, and many moral, as well as natural accompliſhments; yet were they not exempted from boaſting and pride; which was indeed a vice moſt epidemic, and as it were congenial, among all the philoſophers; but in a more particular manner, among the Pythagoreans. So Hornius Hiſt. Philoſoph. L. 3. chap. 11. *The manners of the Pythagoreans were not free from boaſting. They were all* ΠΕΡΙΑΥΤΟΑΟΥΟΙ, *ſuch as abounded in the ſenſe and commendation of their own excellencies, and boaſting even almoſt to the degree of immodeſty and impudence, as great* Heinſius ad Horat. *has rightly obſerved.* Thus indeed does proud nature delight to walk in the ſparks of its own fire. And although many of theſe old philoſophers could, by the ſtrength of their own lights and heats, together with ſome common elevations and raiſures of ſpirit, (peradventure from a more than ordinary, though not ſpecial and ſaving aſſiſtance of the Spirit), abandon many groſſer vices; yet they were all deeply immerſed in that miſerable curſed abyſs of ſpiritual pride: ſo that all their natural, and moral and philoſophic attainments, did feed, nouriſh, ſtrengthen, and render moſt inveterate, this hell bred peſt of their hearts. Yea thoſe of them that ſeemed moſt modeſt, as the Academics, who profeſſed they knew nothing, and the Cynics, who greatly decried, both in words and habits, the pride of others, yet even they abounded in the moſt notorious and viſible pride. So connatural and morally eſſential to corrupt nature, is this envenomed root, fountain, and plague of ſpiritual pride; eſpecially where there is any natural, moral, or philoſophic excellence to feed the ſame. Whence Auſtin rightly judged all theſe philoſophic virtues, to be but ſplendid ſins." *Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, Part II. B. ii. chap. 10. § 17.

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great shew of humility in speech and behaviour; but they commonly make bungling work of it, though glorious work in their own eyes. They cannot find out what a humble speech and behaviour is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a savour of Christian humility in what they say and do: that sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not *led by the Spirit*, or naturally guided to a behaviour becoming holy humility, by the vigour of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and such times, and abounding in very bad expressions which they use about themselves; such as, *I am the least of all saints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! my heart is worse than the devil! Oh, this cursed heart of mine*, &c. Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart that is broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus's feet with her tears, not as *remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth more because of their shame, when God is pacified*, as the expression is, Ezek. xvi. 63. but with a light air, with smiles in the countenance, or with a pharisaical affectation: and we must believe that they are thus humble, and see themselves so vile, upon the credit of their *say so*; for there is nothing appears in them of any savour of humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds that they do. There are many that are full of expressions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them some of the chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked hearts, and their great short-comings, and unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrenness and unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others; it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be danger of a rooted prejudice in them against such a minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against *legal doctrines*,

*doctrines*, *legal preaching*, and a *legal spirit*, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A *legal spirit* is a more subtil thing than they imagine, it is too subtil for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he is of a *legal spirit*. A spirit of pride of a man's own righteousness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodness whatsoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in Adam before the fall, to be of a legal spirit; because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen sinful creature, can be nothing also but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living that is lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glisters in his own eyes, but what trusts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them; however he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the *great things God has done for him*, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates something to himself, as though his experiences were some dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them so too; for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true; and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and so unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glisters as much in God's eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's sight, and recommend him to God: and with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to hell. Poor deluded wretches, who think they look so glistering in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, that the most impure beast in Sodom, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to *live upon experiences*, according to the true notion of it;

it; and not to do as those, who only make use of spiritual experiences, as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

There is a sort of men, who indeed abundantly cry down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and set up themselves very much as evangelical persons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair shew of advancing Christ and the gospel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the gospel-way of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure humble Christianity †.

There is a pretended great humiliation, and being dead to the law, and emptied of self, which is one of the biggest and most elated things in the world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their own hearts, and of being brought fully off from works; whose conversation has savoured most of a self-righteous spirit, of any that ever I had opportunity to observe. And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to heaven with an high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and ostentatious of their humility. This appears in that first-born of pride, among the children of men, that would be called *his holiness*, even the man of sin, that ex-

† "Take not every opinion and doctrine from men or angels, that bears a fair shew of advancing Christ; for they may be but the fruits of evangelical hypocrisy and deceit; that being deceived themselves, may deceive others too; Matth. vii. 15. *Beware of them, that come in sheep's cloathing;* in the innocency, purity, and meekness of Christ and his people; *but inwardly are wolves,* proud, cruel, censorious, *speaking evil of what they knew not. By their fruits you shall know them.* Do not think, beloved, that Satan will not seek to send delusions among us. And do you think these delusions will come out of the Popish pack, whose inventions smell above ground here? No, he must come, and will come with more evangelical, fine-spun devices. It is a rule observed amongst Jesuits, at this day, if they would conquer religion by subtilty, never oppose religion with a cross religion; but set it against itself. So oppose the gospel by the gospel. And look, as churches pleading for works, had new invented devised works; so when faith is preached, men will have their new inventions of faith. I speak not this against the doctrine of faith, where it is preached; but am glad of it: not that I would have men content themselves with every form of faith; for I believe that most mens faith needs confirming or trying. But I speak to prevent danger on that hand." *Shepard's Parable,* Part I. p. 122.

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alts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself *servant of servants*; and to make a shew of humility, washes the feet of a number of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, and to be poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is astonishing how greatly many are deceived about themselves as to this matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behaviour is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much, as this of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The subtilty of Satan appears in its height, in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience: he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it; it was his own sin.—Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtil and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may (perhaps universally and surely) be discovered and distinguished.

The *first* thing is this; he that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others. It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly good and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart, Luke xviii. 11. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men.* And Is. lxv. 5. *I am holier than thou.* Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's people, and as it were to take a high seat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7. *&c. take the highest room.* This they do, by being forward to take upon them the place and business of the chief; to guide, teach, direct and manage; *They are confident that they are guides to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes*, Rom. ii. 19. 20. It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the part of dictators and masters in matters of religion; and so they implicitly affect to be called of men Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the Pharisees did, Matth. xxiii. 6. 7. *i. e.*

they are apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as masters, in matters of religion *.

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves; Phil. ii. 3. *In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.* Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them; and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Saviour, Luke xiv. 10. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with Moses and Jeremiah, (Exod. iii. 11. Jer. i. 6.), though they were such eminent saints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: they are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others, than to dictate to others; Jam. i. 19. *Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak.* And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak, trembling. Hos. xiii. 1. *When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.* They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be subject to others; Jam. iii. 1. 2. *Be not many masters.* 1 Pet. v. 5. *All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.* Eph. v. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

There are some persons experiences that naturally work that way, to make them think highly of their experiences; and they do often themselves speak of their experiences as very great and extraordinary; they freely speak of the *great things they have met with.* This may be spoken and meant in a good sense. In one sense, every degree of saving mercy is a *great thing*: it is indeed a thing *great*, yea, *infinitely great*, for God to bestow the least crumb of childrens bread on such dogs as we

* "There be two things wherein it appears that a man has only common gifts, and no inward principle; 1. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did; and many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 181. 184.

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are in ourſelves; and the more humble a perſon is that hopes that God has beſtowed ſuch mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a *great thing that he has met with*, in this ſenſe. But if by *great things which they have experienced*, they mean comparatively great ſpiritual experiences, or great compared with others experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the caſe; then for a perſon to ſay, *I have met with great things*, is the very ſame thing as to ſay, *I am an eminent ſaint*, and have more grace than ordinary: for to have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the ſame thing as to have great grace: there is no true experience, but the exerciſe of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holineſs. The perſons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others ſhould admire them. Indeed they do not call it boaſting to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any ſign of pride; becauſe they ſay, *they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they are the great things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has ſhown them, and not make light of it.* But ſo it was with the Phariſee that Chriſt tells us of, Luke xviii. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; *God, I thank thee*, ſays he, *that I am not as other men* *. Their verbally aſcribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other ſaints, does not hinder their forwardneſs to think ſo highly of their holineſs, being a ſure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of an humble ſpirit, their attainments in religion would not be ſo apt to ſhine in their own eyes, nor would they be ſo much in admiring their own beauty. The Chriſtians that are really the moſt eminent ſaints, and therefore have the moſt excellent experiences, *and are greateſt in the kingdom of heaven, humble themſelves as a little child*, Matth. xviii. 4. becauſe they look on themſelves as but little children in grace, and their attainments to be but the attainments of babes in Chriſt, and are aſtoniſhed at, and aſhamed of the low degrees of their love, and their thankfulneſs, and their little knowledge of God. Moſes when he had been converſing with God

* Calvin, in his Inſtitutions, B. III. chap. xii. § 7. ſpeaking of this Phariſee, obſerves, "That in his outward confeſſion, he acknowledges that the righteouſneſs that he has is the gift of God: but (ſays he) becauſe he truſts *that he is righteous*, he goes away out of the preſence of God, unacceptable and odious."

in the mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others as to dazzle their eyes, *wist not that his face shone*. There are some persons that go by the name of high professors, and some will own themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints, that will shine brightest in heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess themselves to be the least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his †.

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the present state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their deformity great. And they that have the most grace and spiritual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. As will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs the nature and reason of things, and considers the things following.

*That* grace and holiness is worthy to be called little, that is, little in comparison of what it ought to be. And so it seems to one that is truly gracious: for such an one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his soul struggles and reaches after; and it is by that that he estimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious soul, and especially to one eminently gracious, *that* holiness appears little, which is little of what it should be; little of what he sees infinite reason for, and obligation to. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to

† Luther, as his words are cited by Rutherfoord, in his *Display of the spiritual Antichrist*, p. 143. 144. says thus, "So is the life of a Christian, that he that has begun, seems to himself to have nothing; but strives and presses forward, that he may apprehend. Whence Paul says, *I count not myself to have apprehended.* For indeed nothing is more pernicious to a believer, than that presumption, that he has already apprehended, and has no further need of seeking. Hence also many fall back, and pine away in spiritual security and slothfulness. So Bernard says, *To stand still in God's way, is to go back.* Wherefore this remains to him that has begun to be a Christian, to think that he is not yet a Christian, but to seek that he may be a Christian, that he may glory with Paul, *I am not, but I desire to be;* a Christian not yet finished, but only in his beginnings. Therefore he is not a Christian, that is a Christian, that is, he that thinks himself a finished Christian, and is not sensible how he falls short. We reach after heaven, but are not in heaven. Wo to him that is wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himself to be so. That man, without doubt, has never so much as begun to be renewed, nor did he ever taste what it is to be a Christian."

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be mentioned as any beauty or amiableneſs in him. For the like reaſon as a hungry man naturally accounts that which is ſet before him, but a little food, a ſmall matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in compariſon of his appetite. Or as the child of a great prince, that is jealous for the honour of his father, and beholds the reſpect which men ſhew him, naturally looks on that honour and reſpect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is nothing in compariſon of that which the dignity of his father requires.

But that is the nature of true grace and ſpiritual light, that it opens to a perſon's view the infinite reaſon there is that he ſhould be holy in a high degree. And the more grace he has, the more this is opened to view, the greater ſenſe he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite dignity of the perſon of Chriſt, and the boundleſs length and breadth, and depth and height, of the love of Chriſt to ſinners. And as grace increaſes, the field opens more and more to a diſtant view, until the ſoul is ſwallowed up with the vaſtneſs of the object, and the perſon is aſtoniſhed to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has ſo loved man, and how little he does love. And ſo the more he apprehends, the more the ſmallneſs of his grace and love appears ſtrange and wonderful: and therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the littleneſs of his own grace, he can ſcarcely believe that ſo ſtrange a thing happens to other ſaints: it is amazing to him, that one that is really a child of God, and that has actually received the ſaving benefits of that unſpeakable love of Chriſt, ſhould love no more: and he is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himſelf, a ſtrange and exempt inſtance; for he ſees only the outſide of other Chriſtians, but he ſees his own inſide.

Here the reader may poſſibly object, that love to God is really increaſed in proportion as the knowledge of God is increaſed; and therefore how ſhould an increaſe of knowledge in a ſaint, make his love appear leſs, in compariſon of what is known? To which I anſwer, that although grace and the love of God in the ſaints, be anſwerable to the degree of knowledge or ſight of God; yet it is not in proportion to the object ſeen and known. The ſoul of a ſaint, by having ſomething of God opened to ſight, is convinced of much more than is ſeen. There is ſomething that is ſeen, that is wonderful; and that ſight brings with it a ſtrong conviction of ſomething vaſtly beyond, that is not immediately ſeen. So that the ſoul, at the

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ſame time, is aſtoniſhed at its ignorance, and that it knows ſo little, as well as that it loves ſo little. And as the ſoul, in a ſpiritual view, is convinced of infinitely more in the object, yet beyond ſight; ſo it is convinced of the capacity of the ſoul, of knowing vaſtly more, if clouds and darkneſs were but removed. Which cauſes the ſoul, in the enjoyment of a ſpiritual view, to complain greatly of ſpiritual ignorance, and want of love, and long and reach after more knowledge, and more love.

Grace and the love of God in the moſt eminent ſaints in this world, is truly very little in compariſon of what it ought to be. Becauſe the higheſt love, that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in compariſon of what our obligations appear to be, from the joint conſideration of theſe two things; *viz.* 1. The reaſon God has given us to love him, in the manifeſtations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word, and in his works; and particularly in the goſpel of his Son, and what he has done for ſinful man by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the ſoul of man, by thoſe intellectual faculties which God has given it, of ſeeing and underſtanding theſe reaſons, which God has given us to love him. How ſmall indeed is the love of the moſt eminent ſaint on earth, in compariſon of what theſe things jointly conſidered do require! And this grace tends to convince men of; and eſpecially eminent grace: for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view. And therefore he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others, that great height to which his love ought to aſcend; and he ſees better than others, how little a way he has riſen towards that height. And therefore, eſtimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears aſtoniſhingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent ſaint, having ſuch a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, this ſhews him, not only the littleneſs of his grace, but the greatneſs of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or ſin we have remaining in us, we muſt take our meaſure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends: the whole of the diſtance we are at from that height, is ſin: for failing of duty is ſin; otherwiſe our duty is not our duty; and by how much the more we fall ſhort of our duty, ſo much the more ſin have we. Sin is no other than diſagreeableneſs, in a moral agent, to the law, or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of ſin is to be judged of by the rule: ſo much diſagreeableneſs to the rule, ſo much ſin, whether it be in *defect* or *exceſs*. Therefore

fore if men, in their love to God, do not come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; becauſe there is more goodneſs wanting, than is there; and all that is wanting is ſin: it is an abominable defect; and appears ſo to the ſaints, eſpecially thoſe that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them, that Chriſt ſhould be loved ſo little, and thanked ſo little for his dying love; it is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increaſe of grace has a tendency another way, to cauſe the ſaints to think their deformity vaſtly more than their goodneſs: it not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodneſs, which is indeed the caſe; but it alſo tends to cauſe the deformity that there is in the leaſt ſin, or the leaſt degree of corruption, to appear ſo great, as vaſtly to outweigh all the beauty there is in their greateſt holineſs; for this alſo is indeed the caſe. For the leaſt ſin againſt an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulneſs or deformity in it; but the higheſt degree of holineſs in a creature, has not an infinite lovelineſs in it: and therefore the lovelineſs of it is as nothing, in compariſon of the deformity of the leaſt ſin. That every ſin has infinite deformity and hatefulneſs in it, is moſt demonſtrably evident; becauſe what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulneſs of ſin conſiſts in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we ſhould be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, ſo much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulneſs of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love and honour any being, is in ſome proportion to his lovelineſs and honourableneſs, or to his worthineſs to be loved and honoured by us; which is the ſame thing. We are ſurely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a leſs lovely: and if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him, are infinitely great: and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity, and unworthineſs. But on the other hand, with reſpect to our holineſs or love to God, there is not an infinite worthineſs in that. The ſin of the creature againſt God, is ill-deſerving and hateful in proportion to the diſtance there is between God and the creature: the greatneſs of the object, and the meanneſs and inferiority of the ſubject, aggravates it. But it is the reverſe with regard to the worthineſs of the reſpect of the creature to God; it is *worthleſs*, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanneſs of the ſubject. So much the greater the diſtance between God and

and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great degree of superiority increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful: but the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; because the more he is inferior, the less is he worthy of notice, the less he is, the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of sin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it; it is less than a drop to the ocean; for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do things appear to him, in this respect, as they are indeed. Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past deformity, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and in the abominable defects of his highest and best affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them without complaints of any hateful evil left in them; (though it may be they cry out much of their past unworthiness); a sure and certain evidence that their discoveries (as they call them) are darkness and not light. It is darkness that hides mens pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all-searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true, that saving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the *positive exercises* of it, such as malice, envy, covetousness, lasciviousness, murmuring, *&c.* but they bring corruption to light, in that which is privative, *viz.* that there is no more love, no more humility, no more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful, in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very

very burdenſome, and cauſe the ſaints to cry out of their leanneſs, and odious pride and ingratitude. And whatever poſitive exerciſes of corruption, at any time ariſe, and mingle themſelves with eminent actings of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent ſaints are, and the more they have of the light *of heaven* in their ſouls, the more do they appear to themſelves, as the moſt eminent ſaints in this world do, to the ſaints and angels *in heaven*. How can we rationally ſuppoſe the moſt eminent ſaints on earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwiſe, than covered over with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and their deformities ſwallowed up and hid in the coruſcation of the beams of his abundant glory and love? how can we ſuppoſe our moſt ardent love and praiſes appear to them, that do behold the beauty and glory of God without a vail? how does our higheſt thankfulneſs for the dying love of Chriſt appear to them, who ſee Chriſt as he is, who know as they are known, and ſee the glory of the perſon of him that died, and the wonders of his dying love, without any cloud or darkneſs? and how do they look on the deepeſt reverence and humility, with which worms of the duſt on earth approach that infinite Majeſty, which they behold? do they appear great to them, or ſo much as worthy of the name of reverence and humility, in thoſe that they ſee to be at ſuch an infinite diſtance from that great and holy God, in whoſe glorious preſence they are? The reaſon why the higheſt attainments of the ſaints on earth appear ſo mean to them, is becauſe they dwell in the light of God's glory, and ſee God as he is. And it is in this reſpect with the ſaints on earth, as it is with the ſaints in heaven, in proportion as they are more eminent in grace.

I would not be underſtood, that the ſaints on earth have, in all reſpects, the worſt opinion of themſelves, when they have moſt of the exerciſe of grace. In many reſpects it is otherwiſe. With reſpect to the poſitive exerciſes of corruption, they may appear to themſelves freeſt and beſt when grace is moſt in exerciſe, and worſt when the actings of grace are loweſt. And when they compare themſelves with themſelves, at different times, they may know, when grace is in lively exerciſe, that it is better with them than it was before, (though before, in the time of it, they did not ſee ſo much badneſs as they ſee now); and when afterwards they ſink again in the frame of their minds, they may know that they ſink, and have a new argument of their great remaining corruption, and a *rational*

conviction of a greater vileneſs than they ſaw before; and may have more of a ſenſe of guilt, and a kind of *legal* ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs, by far, than when in the lively exerciſe of grace. But yet it is true, and demonſtrable from the forementioned conſiderations, that the children of God never have ſo much of a *ſenſible* and *ſpiritual* conviction of their deformity, and ſo great, and quick, and abaſing a ſenſe of their preſent vileneſs and odiouſneſs, as when they are higheſt in the exerciſe of true and pure grace; and never are they ſo much diſpoſed to ſet themſelves low among Chriſtians as then. And thus *he that is greateſt in the kingdom*, or moſt eminent in the church of Chriſt, is the ſame *that humbles himſelf*, as the leaſt infant among them; agreeable to that great ſaying of Chriſt, Matth. xviii. 4.

A true ſaint may know that he has ſome true grace: and the more grace there is, the more eaſily is it known; as was obſerved and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent ſaint is eaſily ſenſible that he is an eminent ſaint, when compared with others.—I will not deny that it is poſſible, that he that has much grace, and is an eminent ſaint, may know it. But he will not be apt to know it; it will not be a thing obvious to him: that he is better than others, and has higher experiences and attainments, is not a foremoſt thought; nor is it that which, from time to time, readily offers itſelf; it is a thing that is not in his way, but lies far out of ſight; he muſt take pains to convince himſelf of it; there will be need of a great command of reaſon, and a high degree of ſtrictneſs and care in arguing, to convince himſelf. And if he be rationally convinced, by a very ſtrict conſideration of his own experiences, compared with the great appearances of low degrees of grace in ſome other ſaints, it will hardly ſeem real to him, that he has more grace than they; and he will be apt to loſe the conviction, that he has by pains obtained; nor will it ſeem at all natural to him to act upon that ſuppoſition. And this may be laid down as an infallible thing, *That the perſon who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent ſaint, much diſtinguiſhed in Chriſtian experience, in whom this is a firſt thought, that riſes of itſelf, and naturally offers itſelf; he is certainly miſtaken; he is no eminent ſaint; but under the great prevailings of a proud and ſelf-righteous ſpirit.* And if this be habitual with the man, and is ſtatedly the prevailing temper of his mind, he is no ſaint at all; he has not the leaſt degree of any true Chriſtian experience; ſo ſurely as the word of God is true.

And that ſort of experiences that appears to be of that tendency,

cy, and is found from time to time to have that effect, to elevate the subject of them with a great conceit of those experiences, is certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed discoveries that naturally blow up the person with an admiration of the eminency of his discoveries, and fill him with conceit, that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the nature of true spiritual light in them. All true spiritual knowledge is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own ignorance; as is evident by 1 Cor. viii. 2. *He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* Agur, when he had a great discovery of God, and sense of the wonderful height of his glory, and of his marvellous works, and cries out of his greatness and incomprehensibleness; at the same time, had the deepest sense of his brutish ignorance, and looked upon himself the most ignorant of all the saints; Prov. xxx. 2. 3. 4. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth?* what is his name, *and what is his son's name*, if thou canst tell?

For a man to be highly conceited of his spiritual and divine knowledge, is for him to be wise in his own eyes, if any thing is. And therefore it comes under those prohibitions, Prov. iii. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes;* Rom. xii. 16. *Be not wise in your own conceits:* and brings men under that wo, Is. v. 21. *Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* Those that are thus wise in their own eyes, are some of the least likely to get good of any in the world. Experience shews the truth of that, Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

To this some may object, that the psalmist, when we must suppose that he was in a holy frame, speaks of his knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other saints, Psal. cxix. 99. 100. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients: because I keep thy precepts.*

To this I answer two things:

(1.) There is no restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he shall reveal to a prophet, for the benefit of his church, who is speaking or writing under *immediate inspi-*

*ration.* The Spirit of God may reveal to such an one, and dictate to him, to declare to others, secret things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him mysteries, that otherwise would be above the reach of his reason; or things in a distant place, that he cannot see; or future events, that it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him: so the Spirit of God might reveal to David this distinguishing benefit he had received, by conversing much with God's testimonies; and use him as his instrument to record it for the benefit of others, to excite them to the like duty, and to use the same means to gain knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural tendency of the *ordinary* gracious influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that David declares of his distinguishing knowledge under the *extraordinary* influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine mind by inspiriation, and using David as his instrument to write what he pleased for the benefit of his church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural tendency of grace to incline men to curse others, and wish the most dreadful misery to them that can be thought of, because David, under inspiration, often curses others, and prays that such misery may come upon them.

(2.) It is not certain that the knowledge David here speaks of, is spiritual knowledge, wherein holiness does fundamentally consist. But it may be that greater revelation which God made to him of the Messiah, and the things of his future kingdom, and the far more clear and extensive knowledge that he had of the mysteries and doctrines of the gospel, than others; as a reward for his keeping God's testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the book of Psalms, that David far exceeded all that had gone before him.

*Secondly*, Another thing that is an infallible sign of spiritual pride, is persons being apt to think highly of their humility. False experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit humility. And it is the very nature of a counterfeit humility, to be highly conceited of itself. False religious affections have generally that tendency, especially when raised to a great height, to make persons think that their humility is great, and accordingly to take much notice of their great attainments in this respect, and admire them. But eminently gracious affections (I scruple not to say it) are evermore of a contrary tendency, and

and have univerſally a contrary effect, in thoſe that have them. They indeed make them very ſenſible what reaſon there is that they ſhould be deeply humbled, and cauſe them earneſtly to thirſt and long after it; but they make their preſent humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear ſmall; and their remaining pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The reaſon why a proud perſon ſhould be apt to think his humility great, and why a very humble perſon ſhould think his humility ſmall, may be eaſily ſeen, if it be conſidered, that it is natural for perſons, in judging of the degree of their own humiliation, to take their meaſure from that which they eſteem their proper height, or the dignity wherein they properly ſtand. That may be great humiliation in one, that is no humiliation at all in another; becauſe the degree of honourableneſs or conſiderableneſs, wherein each does properly ſtand, is very different. For ſome great man, to ſtoop to looſe the latchet of the ſhoes of another great man, his equal, or to waſh his feet, would be taken notice of as an act of abaſement in him; and he being ſenſible of his own dignity, would look upon it ſo himſelf. But if a poor ſlave is ſeen ſtooping to unlooſe the ſhoes of a great prince, no body will take any notice of this, as any act of humiliation in him, or token of any great degree of humility: nor would the ſlave himſelf, unleſs he be horribly proud, and ridiculouſly conceited of himſelf: and if after he had done it, he ſhould, in his talk and behaviour, ſhew that he thought his abaſement great in it, and had his mind much upon it, as an evidence of his being very humble; would not every body cry out upon him, "Who do you think yourſelf "to be, that you ſhould think this that you have done, ſuch a "deep humiliation?" This would make it plain to a demonſtration, that this ſlave was ſwollen with a high degree of pride and vanity of mind, as much as if he declared in plain terms, *I think myſelf to be ſome great one.* And the matter is no leſs plain and certain, when worthleſs, vile and loathſome worms of the duſt, are apt to put ſuch a conſtruction on their acts of abaſement before God; and to think it a token of great humility in them, that they, under their affections, can find themſelves ſo willing to acknowledge themſelves to be ſo and ſo mean and unworthy, and to behave themſelves as thoſe that are ſo inferior. The very reaſon why ſuch outward acts, and ſuch inward exerciſes, look like great abaſement in ſuch an one, is becauſe he has a high conceit of himſelf. Whereas if he thought of himſelf more juſtly, theſe things would appear nothing to him,

him, and his humility in them worthy of no regard; but would rather be aſtoniſhed at his pride, that one ſo infinitely deſpicable and vile, is brought no lower before God.——When he ſays in his heart, "This is a great act of humiliation; it is "certainly a ſign of great humility in me, that I ſhould feel "thus, and do ſo:" his meaning is, "This is great humility "for me, for ſuch a one as I, that am ſo conſiderable and "worthy." He conſiders how low he is now brought, and compares this with the height of dignity, on which he in his heart thinks he properly ſtands, and the diſtance appears very great, and he calls it all mere humility, and as ſuch admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble, and really ſees his own vileneſs and loathſomeneſs before God, the diſtance appears the other way. When he is brought loweſt of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper ſtation, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himſelf, yet vaſtly above it; he longs to get lower, that he may come to it; but appears at a great diſtance from it. And this diſtance he calls pride. And therefore his pride appears great to him, and not his humility. For although he is brought much lower than he uſed to be; yet it does not appear to him worthy of the name of humiliation, for him that is ſo infinitely mean and deteſtable, to come down to a place, which though it be lower than what he uſed to aſſume, is yet vaſtly higher than what is proper for him. As men would hardly count it worthy of the name of humility, in a contemptible ſlave, that formerly affected to be a prince, to have his ſpirit ſo far brought down, as to take the place of a nobleman; when this is ſtill ſo far above his proper ſtation.

All men in the world, in judging of the degree of their own and others humility, as appearing in any act of theirs, conſider two things; *viz.* the real degree of dignity they ſtand in; and the degree of abaſement, and the relation it bears to that real dignity. Thus the complying with the ſame low place, or low act, may be an evidence of great humility in one, that evidences but little or no humility in another. But truly humble Chriſtians have ſo mean an opinion of their own real dignity, that all their ſelf-abaſement, when conſidered with relation to that, and compared with that, appears very ſmall to them. It does not ſeem to them to be any great humility, or any abaſement to be made much of, for ſuch poor, vile, abject creatures as they, to lie at the foot of God.

The degree of humility is to be judged of by the degree of *abaſement*, and the degree of the *cauſe for abaſement:* but he that

that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his humility great, conſidering the cauſe. The cauſe why he ſhould be abaſed appears ſo great, and the abaſement of the frame of his heart ſo greatly ſhort of it, that he takes much more notice of his pride than his humility.

Every one that has been converſant with ſouls under convictions of ſin, knows that thoſe who are greatly convinced of ſin, are not apt to think themſelves greatly convinced. And the reaſon is this: men judge of the degree of their own convictions of ſin by two things jointly conſidered; *viz.* the degree of ſenſe which they have of guilt and pollution, and the degree of cauſe they have for ſuch a ſenſe, in the degree of their real ſinfulneſs. It is really no argument of any great conviction of ſin, for ſome men to think themſelves to be very ſinful, beyond moſt others in the world; becauſe they are ſo indeed, very plainly and notoriouſly. And therefore a far leſs conviction of ſin may incline ſuch an one to think ſo than another; he muſt be very blind indeed not to be ſenſible of it. But he that is truly under great convictions of ſin, naturally thinks this to be his caſe. It appears to him, that the cauſe he has to be ſenſible of guilt and pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he aſcribes his ſenſibleneſs of this, to the greatneſs of his ſin, and not to the greatneſs of his ſenſibility. It is natural for one under great convictions, to think himſelf one of the greateſt of ſinners in reality, and alſo that it is ſo very plainly and evidently; for the greater his convictions are, the more plain and evident it ſeems to be to him. And therefore it neceſſarily ſeems to him ſo plain and ſo eaſy to him to ſee it, that it may be ſeen without much conviction. *That* man is under great convictions, whoſe conviction is great in proportion to his ſin. But no man that is truly under great convictions, thinks his conviction great in proportion to his ſin. For if he does, it is a certain ſign that he inwardly thinks his ſins ſmall: And if that be the caſe, *that* is a certain evidence that his conviction is ſmall. And this, by the way, is the main reaſon, that perſons, when under a work of humiliation, are not ſenſible of it, in the time of it.

And as it is with conviction of ſin, juſt ſo it is, by parity of reaſon, with reſpect to perſons conviction or ſenſibleneſs of their own meanneſs and vileneſs, their own blindneſs, their own impotence, and all that low ſenſe that a Chriſtian has of himſelf, in the exerciſe of *evangelical humiliation*. So that in a high degree of this, the ſaints are never diſpoſed to think their ſenſibleneſs of their own meanneſs, filthineſs, impotence, *&c.*

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to be great; becauſe it never appears great to them, conſidering the cauſe.

An eminent ſaint is not apt to think himſelf eminent in any thing; all his graces and experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively ſmall; but eſpecially his humility. There is nothing that appertains to Chriſtian experience, and true piety, that is ſo much out of his ſight as his humility. He is a thouſand times more quick-ſighted to diſcern his pride, than his humility: *that* he eaſily diſcerns, and is apt to take much notice of, but hardly diſcerns his humility. On the contrary, the deluded hypocrite, that is under the power of ſpiritual pride, is ſo blind to nothing as his pride; and ſo quick-ſighted to nothing, as the ſhews of humility that are in him.

The humble Chriſtian is more apt to find fault with his own pride than with other mens. He is apt to put the beſt conſtruction on others words and behaviour, and to think that none are ſo proud as himſelf. But the proud hypocrite is quick to diſcern the mote in his brother's eye, in this reſpect; while he ſees nothing of the beam in his own. He is very often much in crying out of others pride, finding fault with others apparel, and way of living; and is affected ten times as much with his neighbour's ring or ribbond, as with all the filthineſs of his own heart.

From the diſpoſition there is in hypocrites to think highly of their humility, it comes to paſs that counterfeit humility is forward to put forth itſelf to view. Thoſe that have it, are apt to be much in ſpeaking of their humiliations, and to ſet them forth in high terms, and to make a great outward ſhew of humility, in affected looks, geſtures, or manner of ſpeech, or meanneſs of apparel, or ſome affected ſingularity. So it was of old with the falſe prophets, Zech. xiii. 4.; ſo it was with the hypocritical Jews, Iſ. lvii. 5.; and ſo Chriſt tells us it was with the Phariſees, Matth. vi. 16. But it is contrariwiſe with true humility; they that have it, are not apt to diſplay their eloquence in ſetting of it forth, or to ſpeak of the degree of their abaſement in ſtrong terms *. It does not

* It is an obſervation of Mr Jones, in his excellent treatiſe of the canon of the New Teſtament, that the evangeliſt Mark, who was the companion of St Peter, and is ſuppoſed to have written his goſpel under the direction of that apoſtle, when he mentions Peter's repentance after his denying his Maſter, he does not uſe ſuch ſtrong terms to ſet it forth as the other evangeliſts, he only uſes theſe words, *When he thought thereon, he wept*, Mark xiv. 72.; whereas the other evangeliſts ſay thus, *He went out, and wept bitterly*, Matth. xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

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affect to shew itself in any singular outward meanness of apparel, or way of living; agreeable to what is implied in Matth. vi. 17. *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.* Col. ii. 23. *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body.* Nor is true humility a noisy thing; it is not loud and boisterous. The scripture represents it as of a contrary nature. Ahab, when he had a visible humility, a resemblance of true humility, *went softly*, 1 Kings xxi. 27. A penitent, in the exercise of true humiliation, is represented as still and silent, Lam. iii. 28. *He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.* And silence is mentioned as what attends humility; Prov. xxx. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.*

Thus I have particularly and largely shewn the nature of that true humility that attends holy affections, as it appears in its tendency to cause persons to think meanly of their attainments in religion, as compared with the attainments of others, and particularly, of their attainments in humility: and have shewn the contrary tendency of spiritual pride, to dispose persons to think their attainments in these respects to be great. I have insisted the longer on this matter, because I look upon it a matter of great importance, as it affords a certain distinction between true and counterfeit humility; and also as this disposition of hypocrites to look on themselves better than others, is what God has declared to be very hateful to him, *a smoke in his nose, and a fire that burneth all the day*, Is. lxv. 5. It is mentioned as an instance of the pride of the inhabitants of that holy city (as it was called) Jerusalem, that they esteemed themselves far better than the people of Sodom, and so looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and disregarded by them; Ezek. xvi. 56. *For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride.*

Let not the reader lightly pass over these things in application to himself. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad sign for a person to be apt to think himself a better saint than others, there will arise a blinding prejudice in your own favour; and there will probably be need of a great strictness of self-examination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If on the proposal of the question, you answer, *No, it seems to me, none are so bad as I.* Do not let the matter pass off so; but examine again, whether or no you do not think yourself better

than others on this very account, becauſe you imagine you think ſo meanly of yourſelf. Have not you an high opinion of this humility? and if you anſwer again, *No; I have not an high opinion of my humility; it ſeems to me I am as proud as the devil;* yet examine again, whether ſelf-conceit do not riſe up under this cover; whether on this very account, that you think yourſelf as proud as the devil, you do not think yourſelf to be very humble.

From this oppoſition that there is between the nature of a true, and of a counterfeit humility, as to the eſteem that the ſubjects of them have of themſelves, ariſes a manifold contrariety of temper and behaviour.

A truly humble perſon, having ſuch a mean opinion of his righteouſneſs and holineſs, is *poor in ſpirit*. For a perſon to be poor in ſpirit, is to be in his own ſenſe and apprehenſion poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an anſwerable diſpoſition. Therefore a truly humble perſon, eſpecially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himſelf in many reſpects as a poor man. *The poor uſeth intreaties, but the rich anſwereth roughly.* A poor man is not diſpoſed to quick and high reſentment when he is among the rich: he is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not ſtiff and ſelf-willed; he is patient with hard fare; he expects no other than to be deſpiſed, and takes it patiently; he does not take it heinouſly that he is overlooked, and but little regarded; he is prepared to be in low place; he readily honours his ſuperiors; he takes reproofs quietly; he readily honours others as above him; he eaſily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his underſtanding and judgement; he is not over nice or humourſome, and has his ſpirit ſubdued to hard things; he is not aſſuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be ſubject to others. Thus it is with the humble Chriſtian. Humility is (as the great Maſtricht expreſſes it) *a kind of holy puſillanimity.*

A man that is very poor is a beggar; ſo is he that is poor in ſpirit. This is a great difference between thoſe affections that are gracious, and thoſe that are falſe: under the former, the perſon continues ſtill a poor beggar at God's gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make men appear to themſelves rich, and increaſed with goods, and not very neceſſitous; they have a great ſtock in their own imagination for their ſubſiſtence †.

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† "This ſpirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes, and empty.—When the man hath got ſome knowledge, and can diſcourſe pretty well,

A poor man is modeſt in his ſpeech and behaviour; ſo, and much more, and more certainly and univerſally, is one that is poor in ſpirit; he is humble and modeſt in his behaviour amongſt men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little children before God, when they are haughty, aſſuming, and impudent in their behaviour amongſt men. The apoſtle informs us, that the deſign of the goſpel is to cut off all glorying, not only before God, but alſo before men, Rom. iv. 1. 2. Some pretend to great humiliation, that are very haughty, audacious and aſſuming in their external appearance and behaviour: but they ought to conſider thoſe ſcriptures, Pſal. cxxxi. 1. *Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great matters, or in things too high for me.* Prov. vi. 16. 17. *Theſe ſix things doth the Lord hate; yea, ſeven are an abomination unto him: a proud look,* &c. —Chap. xxi. 4. *An high look, and a proud heart, are ſin.* Pſal. xviii. 27. *Thou wilt bring down high looks.* And Pſal. ci. 5. *Him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, I will not ſuffer.* 1 Cor. xiii. 4 *Charity vaunteth not itſelf, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly.* There is a certain amiable modeſty and fear that belongs to a Chriſtian behaviour among men, ariſing from humility, that the ſcripture often ſpeaks of; 1 Pet. iii. 15. *Be ready to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you,—with meekneſs and fear.* Rom. xiii. 7. *Fear, to whom fear.* 2 Cor. vii. 15. *Whilſt he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.* Eph. vi. 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling.* 1 Pet. ii. 18. *Servants, be ſubject to your maſters with all fear.* 1 Pet. iii. 2. *While they behold*

well, and hath ſome taſtes of the heavenly gift, ſome ſweet illapſes of grace, and ſo his conſcience is pretty well quieted: and if he hath got ſome anſwer to his prayers, and hath ſweet affections, he grows full: and having eaſe to his conſcience, caſts off ſenſe, and daily groaning under ſin. And hence the ſpirit of prayer dies: he loſes his eſteem of God's ordinances; feels not ſuch need of them; or gets no good, feels no life or power by them.—This is the woful condition of ſome; but yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with the Spirit, the Lord empties him; and the more, the longer he lives. So that though others think he needs not much grace; yet he accounts himſelf the pooreſt." *Shepard's Parable of the ten virgins,* Part II. p. 132.

"After all fillings, be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more." *Ibid.* p. 151.

"Truly, brethren, when I ſee the curſe of God upon many Chriſtians, that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I ſtand adoring the riches of the Lord's mercy, to a little handful of poor believers; not only in making them empty, but in keeping them ſo all their days." *Shepard's Sound Believer,* the late edition in Boſton, p. 158. 159.

*your chaſte converſation coupled with fear.* 1 Tim. ii. 9. *That women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety.* In this reſpect a Chriſtian is like a little child; a little child is modeſt before men, and his heart is apt to be poſſeſſed with fear and awe amongſt them.

The ſame ſpirit will diſpoſe a Chriſtian to honour all men; 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Honour all men.* A humble Chriſtian is not only diſpoſed to honour the ſaints in his behaviour; but others alſo, in all thoſe ways that do not imply a viſible approbation of their ſins. Thus Abraham, the great pattern of believers, honoured the children of Heth; Gen. xxiii. 11. 12. *Abraham ſtood up, and bowed himſelf to the people of the land.* This was a remarkable inſtance of a humble behaviour towards them that were out of Chriſt, and that Abraham knew to be accurſed: and therefore would by no means ſuffer his ſervant to take a wife to his ſon, from among them; and Eſau's wives, being of theſe children of Heth, were a grief of mind to Iſaac and Rebekah. So Paul honoured Feſtus, Acts xxvi. 25. *I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus.* Not only will Chriſtian humility diſpoſe perſons to honour thoſe wicked men that are out of the viſible church, but alſo falſe brethren and perſecutors. As Jacob, when he was in an excellent frame, having juſt been wreſtling all night with God, and received the bleſſing, honoured Eſau, his falſe and perſecuting brother; Gen. xxxiii. 3. *Jacob bowed himſelf to the ground ſeven times, until he came near to his brother Eſau.* So he called him *lord*; and commanded all his family to honour him in like manner.

Thus I have endeavoured to deſcribe the heart and behaviour of one that is governed by a truly gracious humility, as exactly agreeable to the ſcriptures, as I am able.

Now, it is out of ſuch a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Chriſtian affections are like Mary's precious ointment, that ſhe poured on Chriſt's head, that filled the whole houſe with a ſweet odour. *That* was poured out of an *alabaſter-box*; ſo gracious affections flow out to Chriſt out of a *pure heart*. That was poured out of a *broken box*; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuſe its odour: ſo gracious affections flow out of a *broken heart*. Gracious affections are alſo like thoſe of Mary Magdalene, (Luke vii. at the latter end), who alſo pours precious ointment on Chriſt, out of an alabaſter broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jeſus, when ſhe had waſhed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections, that are

a ſweet odour to Chriſt, and that fill the ſoul of a Chriſtian with an heavenly ſweetneſs and fragrancy, are broken-hearted affections. A truly Chriſtian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken-hearted love. The deſires of the ſaints, however earneſt, are humble deſires: their hope is an humble hope; and their joy, even when it is *unſpeakable, and full of glory*, is a humble, broken-hearted joy, and leaves the Chriſtian more poor in ſpirit, and more like a little child, and more diſpoſed to an univerſal lowlineſs of behaviour.

VII. Another thing, wherein gracious affections are diſtinguiſhed from others, is, that *they are attended with a change of nature.*

All gracious affections do ariſe from a ſpiritual underſtanding, in which the ſoul has the excellency and glory of divine things diſcovered to it, as was ſhewn before. But all ſpiritual diſcoveries are transforming; and not only make an alteration of the preſent exerciſe, ſenſation and frame of the ſoul; but ſuch power and efficacy have they, that they make an alteration in the very nature of the ſoul; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Such power as this is properly divine power, and is peculiar to *the Spirit of the Lord:* other power may make a great alteration in mens preſent frames and feelings; but it is the power of a Creator only that can change the nature, or give a new nature. And no diſcoveries or illuminations, but thoſe that are divine and ſupernatural, will have this ſupernatural effect. But this effect all thoſe diſcoveries have, that are truly divine. The ſoul is deeply affected by theſe diſcoveries, and ſo affected as to be transformed.

Thus it is with thoſe affections that the ſoul is the ſubject of in its converſion. The ſcripture repreſentations of converſion do ſtrongly imply and ſignify a change of nature: ſuch as *being born again; becoming new creatures; riſing from the dead; being renewed in the ſpirit of the mind; dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſs; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; a being ingrafted into a new ſtock; a having a divine ſeed implanted in the heart; a being made partakers of the divine nature*, &c.

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in perſons, that think they have experienced a work of converſion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they

they have been affected *. Converſion (if we may give any credit to the ſcripture) is a great and univerſal change of the man, turning him from ſin to God. A man may be reſtrained from ſin, before he is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only reſtrained from ſin, his very heart and nature is turned from it unto holineſs: ſo that thenceforward he becomes a holy perſon, and an enemy to ſin. If therefore, after a perſon's high affections, at his ſuppoſed firſt converſion, it comes to that in a little time, that there is no very ſenſible, or remarkable alteration in him, as to thoſe bad qualities, and evil habits, which before were viſible in him, and he is ordinarily under the prevalence of the ſame kind of diſpoſitions that he uſed to be, and the ſame things ſeem to belong to his character, he appears as ſelfiſh, carnal, as ſtupid, and perverſe, as unchriſtian, and unſavoury as ever; it is greater evidence againſt him, than the brighteſt ſtory of experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion, nor uncircumciſion, neither high profeſſion, nor low profeſſion, neither a fair ſtory, nor a broken one, avails any thing; but a new creature.

If there be a very great alteration viſible in a perſon for a while; if it be not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a ſtated manner, to be much as he uſed to be; it appears to be no change of nature; for nature is an abiding thing. A ſwine that is of a filthy nature may be waſhed, but the ſwiniſh nature remains; and a dove that is of a cleanly nature may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains †.

Indeed allowances muſt be made for the natural temper: converſion does not entirely root out the natural temper: thoſe ſins which a man by his natural conſtitution was moſt inclined to before his converſion, he may be moſt apt to fall into ſtill. But yet converſion will make a great alteration even with reſpect to theſe ſins. Though grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural temper, yet it is of great power and ef-

* "I would not judge of the whole ſoul's coming to Chriſt, ſo much by ſudden pangs, as by an inward bent. For the whole ſoul, in affectionate expreſſions and actions, may be carried to Chriſt; but being without this bent, and change of affections, is unſound." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 203.

† "It is with the ſoul, as with water; all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remains ſtill. You may remove the burning of luſts, not the blackneſs of nature. Where the power of ſin lies, change of conſcience from ſecurity to terror, change of life from profaneneſs to civility, and faſhions of the world, to eſcape the pollutions thereof, change of luſts, nay quenching them for a time: but the nature is never changed, in the beſt hypocrite that ever was." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 194.

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ficacy with reſpect to it, to correct it. The change that is wrought in converſion, is an univerſal change: grace changes a man with reſpect to whatever is ſinful in him; the *old man* is put off, and the *new man* put on; he is ſanctified throughout; and the man becomes a new creature, old things are paſſed away, and *all things* are become new; all ſin is mortified, conſtitution ſins, as well as others. If a man before his converſion, was by his natural conſtitution, eſpecially inclined to laſciviouſneſs, or drunkenneſs, or maliciouſneſs; converting grace will make a great alteration in him, with reſpect to theſe evil diſpoſitions; ſo that however he may be ſtill moſt in danger of theſe ſins, yet they ſhall no longer have dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his character. Yea, true repentance does in ſome reſpects, eſpecially turn a man againſt his own iniquity, *that* wherein he has been moſt guilty, and has chiefly diſhonoured God. He that forſakes other ſins, but ſaves his leading ſin, the iniquity he is chiefly inclined to, is like Saul, when ſent againſt God's enemies the Amalekites, with a ſtrict charge to ſave none of them alive, but utterly to deſtroy them, ſmall and great; who utterly deſtroyed inferior people, but ſaved the king, the chief of them all, alive.

Some fooliſhly make it an argument in favour of their diſcoveries and affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any life or ſenſe, or any thing beyond what they had before. They think it an evidence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themſelves, becauſe (ſay they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can ſee and feel nothing, and are no better than they uſed to be.

It is very true, that all grace and goodneſs in the hearts of the ſaints is entirely from God; and they are univerſally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet theſe perſons are miſtaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himſelf and his Holy Spirit, in imparting ſaving grace to the ſoul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the ſoul, and to dwell there after the manner of a principle of nature; ſo that the ſoul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a new nature: but nature is an abiding thing. All the exerciſes of grace are entirely from Chriſt: but thoſe exerciſes are not from Chriſt, as ſomething that is alive, moves and ſtirs ſomething that is without life, and yet remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; ſo as through Chriſt's power, to have inherent in itſelf, a vital nature. In the ſoul where Chriſt ſavingly *is*, there he *lives*. He does not only live *without* it, ſo as violently to actuate it, but he lives *in* it, ſo that that alſo

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is alive. Grace in the soul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sun-beams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the soul, but in part; because the glass remains as it was, the nature of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any lightsomeness in its nature as ever. But the soul of a saint receives light from the Sun of righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing: not only does the sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light, is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which though they were lit up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themselves burning shining things. The saints do not only drink of the water of life, that flows from the original fountain; but this water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv. 14. and chap. vii. 38. 39. Grace is compared to a seed implanted, that not only is in the ground, but has hold of it, has root there, and grows there, and is an abiding principle of life and nature there.

As it is with spiritual discoveries and affections given at first conversion, so it is in all illuminations and affections of that kind, that persons are the subjects of afterwards; they are all *transforming*. There is a like divine power and energy in them, as in the first discoveries: and they still reach the bottom of the heart, and affect and alter the very nature of the soul, in proportion to the degree in which they are given. And a transformation of nature is continued and carried on by them, to the end of life, until it is brought to perfection in glory. Hence the progress of the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, is represented in scripture, as a continued conversion and renovation of nature. So the apostle exhorts those that were at Rome, *beloved of God, called to be saints*, and that were the subjects of God's redeeming *mercies*, to be *transformed by the renewing of their mind*, Rom. xii. 1. 2. *I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice;—and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Compared with chap. i. 7. So the apostle writing to the *saints and faithful in Christ Jesus*, that were at Ephesus, (Eph. i. 1.) and those who *were once dead in trespasses and sins*, but were now *quickened, and raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that were once far off*,

*off, but were now made nigh by the blood of Chriſt, and that were no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſehold of God, and that were built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;* I ſay, the apoſtle writing to theſe, tells them, *that he ceaſed not to pray for them, that God would give them the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt; the eyes of their underſtanding being enlightened, that they might know,* or experience, *what was the exceeding greatneſs of God's power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,* Eph. i. 16. to the end. In this the apoſtle has reſpect to the glorious power and work of God in converting and renewing the ſoul; as is moſt plain by the ſequel. So the apoſtle exhorts the ſame perſons *to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; and be renewed in the ſpirit of their minds; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs,* Eph. iv. 22. 23. 24.

There is a ſort of high affections that ſome have from time to time, that leave them without any manner of appearance of an abiding effect. They go off ſuddenly; ſo that from the very height of their emotion, and ſeeming rapture, they paſs at once to be quite dead, and void of all ſenſe and activity. It ſurely is not wont to be thus with high gracious affections †; they leave a ſweet ſavour and reliſh of divine things on the heart, and a ſtronger bent of ſoul towards God and holineſs. As Moſes's face not only ſhone while he was in the mount, extraordinarily converſing with God, but it continued to ſhine after he came down from the mount. When men have been converſing with Chriſt in an extraordinary manner, there is a ſenſible effect of it remains upon them; there is ſomething remarkable in their diſpoſition and frame, which if we take knowledge of, and trace to its cauſe, we ſhall find it is becauſe they have been with Jeſus, Acts iv. 13.

VIII. Truly gracious affections differ from thoſe affections that are falſe and deluſive, in that they tend *to*, and are attended *with* the lamb-like, dove-like ſpirit and temper of Jeſus Chriſt; or in other words, they naturally beget and promote

† "Do you think the Holy Ghoſt comes on a man, as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing?" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.

The evidence of this in the scripture is very abundant. It we judge of the nature of Christianity, and the proper spirit of the gospel, by the word of God, this spirit is what may, by way of eminency, be called *the Christian spirit;* and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians, as Christians. When some of the disciples of Christ said something, through inconsideration and infirmity, that was not agreeable to such a spirit, Christ told them that *they knew not what manner of spirit they were of*, Luke ix. 55. implying, that this spirit that I am speaking of, is the proper spirit of his religion and kingdom. All that are truly godly, and real disciples of Christ, have this spirit in them; and not only so, but they *are of* this spirit; it is the spirit by which they are so possessed and governed, that it is their true and proper character. This is evident by what the wise man says, Prov. xvii. 27. (having respect plainly to such a spirit as this), *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit;* and by the particular description Christ gives of the qualities and temper of such as are truly blessed, that shall obtain mercy, and are God's children and heirs, Matth. v. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.* And that this spirit is the special character of the elect of God, is manifest by Col. iii. 12. 13. *Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* And the apostle speaking of that temper and disposition, which he speaks of as the most excellent and essential thing in Christianity, and *that* without which none are true Christians, and the most glorious profession and gifts are nothing, (calling this spirit by the name of charity), he describes it thus; (1 Cor. xiii. 4. 5.) *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not: charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.* And the same apostle, Gal. v. designedly declaring the distinguishing marks and fruits of true Christian grace, chiefly insists on the things that appertain to such a temper and spirit as I am speaking of, ver. 22. 23. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* And so does the apostle James, in describing true grace, or *that wisdom that is from above*, with that declared

red design, that others who are of a contrary spirit may not deceive themselves, and lie against the truth, in professing to be Christians, when they are not, James iii. 14.—17. *If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits.*

Every thing that appertains to holiness of heart, does indeed belong to the nature of true Christianity, and the character of Christians; but a spirit of holiness as appearing in some particular graces, may more especially be called the Christian spirit or temper. There are some amiable qualities and virtues, that do more especially agree with the nature of the gospel constitution, and Christian profession; because there is a special agreeableness in them, with those divine attributes which God has more remarkably manifested and glorified in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, that is the grand subject of the Christian revelation; and also a special agreeableness with those virtues that were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that affair, and the blessed example he hath therein set us; and likewise because they are peculiarly agreeable to the special drift and design of the work of redemption, and the benefits we thereby receive, and the relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And these virtues are such as humility, meekness, love, forgiveness, and mercy. These things therefore especially belong to the character of Christians, as such.

These things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great head of the Christian church. They are so spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited Matth. xxi. 5. *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.* So Christ himself speaks of them, Matth. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* The same appears by the name by which Christ is so often called in scripture, *viz.* THE LAMB. And as these things are especially the character of Christ; so they are also especially the character of Christians. Christians are Christ-like: none deserve the name of Christians, that are not so in their prevailing character. *The new man is renewed, after the image of him that creates him,* Col. iii. 10. All true Christians

*behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame image, by his Spirit,* 2 Cor. iii. 18. The elect are all *predeſtinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren,* Rom. viii. 29. *As we have borne the image of the firſt man, that is earthly, ſo we muſt alſo bear the image of the heavenly: for as is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly,* 1 Cor. xv. 47. 48. 49. Chriſt is full of grace; and Chriſtians all receive of his fulneſs, and grace for grace; *i. e.* there is grace in Chriſtians anſwering to grace in Chriſt, ſuch an anſwerableneſs as there is between the wax and the ſeal; there is character for character: ſuch kind of graces, ſuch a ſpirit and temper, the ſame things that belong to Chriſt's character, belong to theirs. That diſpoſition wherein Chriſt's character does in a ſpecial manner conſiſt, therein does his image in a ſpecial manner conſiſt. Chriſtians that ſhine by reflecting the light of the Sun of righteouſneſs, do ſhine with the ſame ſort of brightneſs, the ſame mild, ſweet and pleaſant beams. Theſe lamps of the ſpiritual temple, that are enkindled by fire from heaven, burn with the ſame ſort of flame. The branch is of the ſame nature with the ſtock and root, has the ſame ſap, and bears the ſame ſort of fruit. The members have the ſame kind of life with the head. It would be ſtrange if Chriſtians ſhould not be of the ſame temper and ſpirit that Chriſt is of; when they are *his fleſh and his bone,* yea, are *one ſpirit,* 1 Cor. vi. 17. and live ſo, that it is *not they that live, but Chriſt that lives in them.* A Chriſtian ſpirit is Chriſt's mark, that he ſets upon the ſouls of his people; his ſeal in their foreheads, bearing his image and ſuperſcription. Chriſtians are the followers of Chriſt: and they are ſo, as they are obedient to that call of Chriſt, Matth. xi. 28. 29. *Come to me, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* They follow him as the Lamb; Rev. xiv. 4. *Theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.* True Chriſtians are as it were clothed with the meek, quiet, and loving temper of Chriſt; for *as many as are in Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* And in this reſpect *the church is clothed with the ſun,* not only by being clothed with his imputed righteouſneſs, but alſo by being adorned with his graces, Rom. xiii. 14. Chriſt the great Shepherd, is himſelf a lamb, and believers are alſo lambs; all the flock are lambs; John xxi. 15. *Feed my lambs.* Luke x. 3. *I ſend you forth as lambs in the midſt of wolves.* The redemption of the church by Chriſt from the power of the devil, was typified

typified of old, by David's delivering the *lamb* out of the mouth of the lion and the bear.

That such manner of virtue as has been spoken of, is the very nature of the Christian spirit, or the spirit that worketh in Christ and in his members, and the distinguishing nature of it, is evident by this, that *the dove* is the very symbol or emblem, chosen of God, to represent it. Those things are fittest emblems of other things, which do best represent *that* which is most distinguishing in their nature. The Spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, descended on him *like a dove*. The dove is a noted emblem of meekness, harmlessness, peace, and love. But the same Spirit that descended on the head of the church, descends to the members. *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts*, Gal. iv. 6. And *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head and members, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 4. Christ breathes his own Spirit on his disciples, John xx. 22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a dove, so Christians also *have an anointing from the holy One*, 1 John ii. 20. 27. And they are anointed with the same oil; it is the same *precious ointment on the head, that goes down to the skirts of the garments*. And on both it is a spirit of peace and love: Psal. cxxxiii. 1. 2. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren, to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments*. The oil on Aaron's garments, had the same sweet and inimitable odour, with that on his head; the smell of the same sweet spices. Christian affections, and a Christian behaviour, is but the flowing out of the savour of Christ's sweet ointments. Because the church has a dove-like temper and disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has doves eyes, Cant. i. 15. *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes*. And chap. iv. 1. *Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes within thy locks*. The same that is said of Christ, chap. vi. 12. *His eyes are as the eyes of doves*. And the church is frequently compared to a dove in scripture, Cant. ii. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock.*—— Chap. v. 2. *Open to me, my love, my dove*. And Chap. vi. 9. *My dove, my undefiled is but one*. Psal. lxviii. 13. *Ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*. And lxxiv. 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked*. The dove

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that Noah sent out of the ark, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot, until she returned, was a type of a true saint.

Meekness is so much the character of the saints, that *the meek* and *the godly*, are used as synonymous terms in scripture: so Psal. xxxvii. 10. 11. the wicked and the meek are set in opposition one to another, as wicked and godly, *Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be:—but the meek shall inherit the earth.* So Psal. cxlvii. 6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

It is doubtless very much on this account, that Christ represents all his disciples, all the heirs of heaven, as little children, Matth. xix. 14. *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. x. 42. *Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* Matth. xviii. 6. *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones,* &c. ver. 10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.* Ver. 14. *It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.* John xiii. 33. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you.* Little children are innocent and harmless; they do not do a great deal of mischief in the world; men need not be afraid of them; they are no dangerous sort of persons; their anger does not last long, they do not lay up injuries in high resentment, entertaining deep and rooted malice. So Christians, in malice, are children, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are not versed in the arts of fiction and deceit; and are strangers to artful disguises. They are yieldable and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; do not trust to their own understanding, but rely on the instructions of parents, and others of superior understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little children, is not only a thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve of, and aim at, and which some of extraordinary proficiency do attain to; but it is their universal character, and absolutely necessary in order to entering into the kingdom of heaven; unless Christ was mistaken, Matth. xviii. 3. *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Mark x. 15. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such thing as Christian

Chriſtian fortitude, and boldneſs for Chriſt, being good ſoldiers in the Chriſtian warfare, and coming out bold againſt the enemies of Chriſt and his people?

To which I anſwer, there doubtleſs is ſuch a thing. The whole Chriſtian life is compared to a warfare, and fitly ſo. And the moſt eminent Chriſtians are the beſt ſoldiers, endued with the greateſt degrees of Chriſtian fortitude. And it is the duty of God's people to be ſtedfaſt, and vigorous in their oppoſition to the deſigns and ways of ſuch as are endeavouring to overthrow the kingdom of Chriſt, and the intereſt of religion. But yet many perſons ſeem to be quite miſtaken concerning the nature of Chriſtian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverſe thing from a brutal fierceneſs, or the boldneſs of beaſts of prey. True Chriſtian fortitude conſiſts in ſtrength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things; in ruling and ſuppreſſing the *evil*, and unruly paſſions and affections of the mind; and in ſtedfaſtly and freely exerting, and following *good* affections and diſpoſitions, without being hindered by ſinful fear, or the oppoſition of enemies. But the paſſions that are reſtrained and kept under, in the exerciſe of this Chriſtian ſtrength and fortitude, are thoſe very paſſions that are vigorouſly and violently exerted in a falſe boldneſs for Chriſt. And thoſe affections that are vigorouſly exerted in true fortitude, are thoſe Chriſtian holy affections, that are directly contrary to them. Though Chriſtian fortitude appears, in withſtanding and counteracting the enemies that are without us; yet it much more appears, in reſiſting and ſuppreſſing the enemies that are within us; becauſe they are our worſt and ſtrongeſt enemies, and have greateſt advantage againſt us. The ſtrength of the good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, appears in nothing more, than in ſtedfaſtly maintaining the holy calm, meekneſs, ſweetneſs, and benevolence of his mind, amidſt all the ſtorms, injuries, ſtrange behaviour, and ſupriſing acts and events of this evil and unreaſonable world. The ſcripture ſeems to intimate that true fortitude conſiſts chiefly in this, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city.*

The directeſt and ſureſt way in the world, to make a right judgement, what a holy fortitude is, in fighting with God's enemies, is to look to the Captain of all God's hoſts, and our great leader and example, and ſee wherein his fortitude and valour appeared, in his chief conflict, and in the time of the greateſt battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with theſe enemies, when he fought with them all alone, and of the people

ple there was none with him, and exercised his fortitude in the highest degree that ever he did, and got that glorious victory that will be celebrated in the praises and triumphs of all the hosts of heaven, throughout all eternity; even to Jesus Christ in the time of his last sufferings, when his enemies in earth and hell made their most violent attack upon him, compassing him round on every side, like renting and roaring lions. Doubtless here we shall see the fortitude of a holy warriour and champion in the cause of God, in its highest perfection and greatest lustre, and an example fit for the soldiers to follow, that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy boldness and valour at that time? not in the exercise of any fiery passions; not in fierce and violent speeches, and vehemently declaiming against, and crying out of the intolerable wickedness of opposers, giving them their own in plain terms; but in not opening his mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers, is dumb, not opening his mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel enemies, because they knew not what they did; not shedding others blood, but with all-conquering patience and love, shedding his own. Indeed one of his disciples, that made a forward pretence to *boldness for Christ*, and confidently declared he would sooner die with Christ than deny him, began to lay about him with a sword: but Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the wound he gives. And never was the patience, meekness, love, and forgiveness of Christ, in so glorious a manifestation, as at that time. Never did he appear so much a *Lamb*, and never did he shew so much of the *dove-like* spirit, as at that time. If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable and wicked opposition of God's and his own enemies, maintaining under all this temptation, the humility, quietness, and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness, and love, and sweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

When persons are fierce and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter passions, it shows weakness, instead of strength and fortitude. 1 Cor. iii. at the beginning, *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.—For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself

himſelf to the diſlike of the world, and even to provoke their diſpleaſure, out of pride. For it is the nature of ſpiritual pride to cauſe men to ſeek diſtinction and ſingularity; and ſo oftentimes to ſet themſelves at war with thoſe that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party. True boldneſs for Chriſt is univerſal, and overcomes all, and carries men above the diſpleaſure of friends and foes; ſo that they will forſake all rather than Chriſt; and will rather offend all parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Chriſt. And that duty which tries whether a man is willing to be deſpiſed by them that are of his own party, and thought the leaſt worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper trial of his boldneſs for Chriſt, than his being forward to expoſe himſelf to the reproach of oppoſers. The apoſtle ſought not glory, not only of Heathens and Jews, but of Chriſtians; as he declares, 1 Theſſ. ii. 26. * He is bold for Chriſt, that has Chriſtian fortitude enough, to confeſs his fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his knees before oppoſers. Such things as theſe are a vaſtly greater evidence of holy boldneſs, than reſolutely and fiercely confronting oppoſers.

As ſome are much miſtaken concerning the nature of true *boldneſs* for Chriſt, ſo they are concerning Chriſtian *zeal*. It is indeed a flame, but a ſweet one; or rather it is the heat and fervour of a ſweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Chriſtian charity; which is the ſweeteſt and moſt benevolent thing that is, or can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervour of this flame, as it ardently and vigorouſly goes out towards the good that is its object, in deſires of it, and purſuit after it; and ſo conſequentially, in oppoſition to the evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed oppoſition, and vigorous oppoſition, that is a part of it, or rather is an attendant of it; but it is againſt *things*, and not *perſons*. Bitterneſs againſt the *perſons* of men is no part of it, but is very contrary to it; inſomuch that ſo much the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raiſed, ſo much the further are perſons from ſuch bitterneſs, and ſo much fuller of love, both to the evil and to the good. As appears from what has been juſt now obſerved, that it is no other, in its very nature and eſſence, than the fervour of a ſpirit of Chri-

* Mr Shepard, ſpeaking of hypocrites affecting applauſe, ſays; "Hence men forſake their friends, and trample under foot the ſcorns of the world: they have credit elſewhere. To maintain their intereſt in the love of godly men, they will ſuffer much." *Parable of the ten virgins*, Part I p. 180

ſtian love. And as to what oppoſition there is in it, to *things*, it is firſtly and chiefly againſt the *evil things* in the perſon himſelf, who has this zeal; againſt the enemies of God and holineſs, that are in his own heart; (as theſe are moſt in his view, and what he is moſt to do with); and but ſecondarily againſt the ſins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Chriſtian zeal, that is contrary to that ſpirit of meekneſs, gentleneſs, and love, that ſpirit of a little child, a lamb and dove, that has been ſpoken of; but it is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to ſay ſomething particularly concerning this Chriſtian ſpirit I have been ſpeaking of, as exerciſed in theſe three things, *forgiveneſs*, *love*, and *mercy*; I would obſerve that the ſcripture is very clear and expreſs concerning the abſolute neceſſity of each of theſe, as belonging to the temper and character of every Chriſtian.

It is ſo as to a *forgiving ſpirit*, or a diſpoſition to overlook and forgive injuries. Chriſt gives it to us both as a negative and poſitive evidence; and is expreſs in teaching us, that if we are of ſuch a ſpirit, it is a ſign we are in a ſtate of forgiveneſs and favour ourſelves; and that if we are not of ſuch a ſpirit, we are not forgiven of God; and ſeems to take ſpecial care that we ſhould take good notice of it, and always bear it on our minds. Matth. vi. 12. 14. 15. *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.—For, if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* Chriſt expreſſes the ſame again at another time, Mark xi. 25. 26. and again in Matth. xviii. 22. to the end, in the parable of the ſervant that owed his lord ten thouſand talents, that would not forgive his fellow-ſervant an hundred pence; and therefore was delivered to the tormentors. In the application of the parable Chriſt ſays, ver. 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.*

And that all true ſaints are of a *loving*, benevolent and beneficent temper, the ſcripture is very plain and abundant. Without it the apoſtle tells us, though we ſhould ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal: and that though we have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; yet without this ſpirit we are nothing. And there is no one virtue or diſpoſition of the mind, that is ſo often, and ſo expreſſly inſiſted on, in the marks that are laid down in the New Teſtament,

Teſtament, whereby to know true Chriſtians. It is often given as a ſign that is peculiarly diſtinguiſhing, by which all may know Chriſt's diſciples, and by which they may know themſelves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and poſitive evidence. Chriſt calls the law of love, by way of eminency, *his commandment*, John xiii. 34. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.* And Chap. xv. 12. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* And ver. 17. *Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another.* And ſays, chap. xiii. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* And Chap. xiv. 21. (ſtill with a ſpecial reference to this which he calls *his* commandment), *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* The beloved diſciple, who had ſo much of this ſweet temper himſelf, abundantly inſiſts on it, in his epiſtles. There is none of the apoſtles, is ſo much in laying down expreſs ſigns of grace, for profeſſors to try themſelves by, as he; and in his ſigns, he inſiſts ſcarcely on any thing elſe, but a ſpirit of Chriſtian love, and an agreeable practice; 1 John ii. 9. 10. *He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him.* Chap. iii. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* ver. 18. 19. *My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.* ver. 23. 24. *This is his commandment, that we ſhould love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Chap. iv. 7. 8. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* ver. 12. 13. *No man hath ſeen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.* ver. 16. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* ver. 20. *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?*

And the ſcripture is as plain as it is poſſible it ſhould be,

that none are true saints, but those whose true character it is, that they are of a disposition to *pity* and *relieve* their fellow-creatures, that are poor, indigent, and afflicted; Psal. xxxvii. 21. *The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.* ver 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth.* Psal. cxii. 5. *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth.* ver. 9. *He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor.* Prov. xiv. 31. *He that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor.* Prov. xxi. 26. *The righteous giveth, and spareth not.* Jer. xxii. 16. *He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.* Jam. i. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,* &c. Hos. vi. 6. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings.* Matth. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* 2 Cor. viii. 8. *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.* Jam. ii. 13.—16. *For he shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.——What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?* 1 John iii. 17. *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* Christ in that description he gives us of the day of judgement, Matth. xxv. (which is the most particular that we have in all the Bible), represents, that judgement will be passed at that day, according as men have been found to have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with that apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him, at that day. Therefore this is an apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in scripture, that a *righteous man*, and a *merciful man* are synonymous expressions; Is. lvii. 1. *The* righteous *perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and* merciful men *are taken away, none considering that the* righteous *is taken away from the evil to come.*

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant, the evidence from scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the

the government of that lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian affections are attended with such a spirit; and that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and the joy, the confidence and the zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me, that true Christians have no remains of a contrary spirit, and can never, in any instances, be guilty of a behaviour disagreeable to such a spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm, until I deny the Bible to be any thing worth, that every thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this tendency, and works this way; and that there is no true Christian upon earth, but is so under the prevailing power of such a spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his character: and that therefore ministers, and others, have no warrant from Christ to encourage persons, that are of a contrary character and behaviour, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair story of illuminations and discoveries. In so doing, they would set up their own wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that rule by which Christ has declared all men should know his disciples. Some persons place religion so much in certain transient illuminations and impressions, (especially if they are in such a particular method and order), and so little in the spirit and temper persons are of, that they greatly deform religion, and form notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the scriptures. The scripture knows of no such true Christians, as are of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious spirit. Nothing can be invented that is a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful, true Christian. We must learn the way of bringing men to rules, and not rules to men, and so strain and stretch the rules of God's word, to take in ourselves, and some of our neighbours, until we make them wholly of none effect.

It is true, that allowances must be made for mens natural temper, with regard to these things, as well as others; but not such allowances, as to allow men, that once were wolves and serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable change in the spirit of their mind. The change made by true conversion, is wont to be most remarkable and sensible, with respect to that which before was the wickedness the person was most notoriously guilty of. Grace has as great a tendency to restrain and

and mortify such sins, as are contrary to the spirit that has been spoken of, as it has to mortify drunkenness or lasciviousness. Yea, the scripture represents the change wrought by gospel-grace, as especially appearing in an alteration of the former sort; Is. xi. 6.—9. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* And to the same purpose is Is. lxv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive times of the Christian church, converts were remarkably changed in this respect: Tit. iii. 3. *&c. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,——he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And Col. iii. 7. 8. *In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

IX. Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False affections, however persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a tendency in the end to harden the heart. A disposition to some kind of passions may be established; such as imply self-seeking, self-exaltation, and opposition to others. But false affections, with the delusion that attends them, finally tend to stupify the mind, and shut it up against those affections wherein tenderness of heart consists: and the effect of them at last is, that persons in the settled frame of their minds, become less affected with their present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins, less moved with the warnings and cautions of God's word, or God's chastisements in his providence, more careless of the frame of their hearts, and the manner and tendency of their behaviour, less quick sighted to discern what is sinful, less afraid of the appearance of evil, than they were while they were under legal awakenings and fears of hell. Now they have been the

subjects

ſubjects of ſuch and ſuch impreſſions and affections, and have a high opinion of themſelves, and look on their ſtate to be ſafe; they can be much more eaſy than before, in living in the neglect of duties that are troubleſome and inconvenient; and are much more ſlow and partial in complying with difficult commands; are in no meaſure ſo alarmed at the appearance of their own defects and tranſgreſſions; are emboldened to favour themſelves more, with reſpect to the labour, and painful care and exactneſs in their walk, and more eaſily yield to temptations, and the ſolicitations of their luſts; and have far leſs care of their behaviour, when they come into the holy preſence of God, in the time of public or private worſhip. Formerly it may be, under legal convictions, they took much pains in religion, and denied themſelves in many things: but now they think themſelves out of danger of hell, they very much put off the burden of the croſs, and ſave themſelves the trouble of difficult duties, and allow themſelves more of the comfort of the enjoyment of their eaſe and their luſts.

Such perſons as theſe, inſtead of embracing Chriſt as their *Saviour from ſin*, they truſt in him as the *ſaviour of their ſins*: inſtead of flying to him as their refuge *from their ſpiritual enemies*, they make uſe of him as the defence *of their ſpiritual enemies*, *from God*, and to ſtrengthen them againſt him. They make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin, and great officer and vicegerent of the devil, to ſtrengthen his intereſt, and make him above all things in the world ſtrong againſt JEHOVAH; ſo that they may ſin againſt him with good courage, and without any fear, being effectually ſecured from reſtraints by his moſt ſolemn warnings and moſt awful threatenings. They truſt in Chriſt to preſerve to them the quiet enjoyment of their ſins, and to be their ſhield to defend them from God's diſpleaſure; while they come cloſe to him, even to his boſom, the place of his children, to fight againſt him, with their mortal weapons, hid under their ſkirts *. However, ſome of theſe, at the ſame time,

* "Theſe are hypocrites that believe, but fail in regard of the uſe of the goſpel, and of the Lord Jeſus. And theſe we read of, Jude 3. viz. of ſome men *that did turn grace into wantonneſs*. For therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but alſo the glorious goſpel of the Lord Jeſus, works in him all manner of unrighteouſneſs. And it is too common for men at the firſt work of converſion, Oh then to cry for grace and Chriſt, and afterwards grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their courſe from the goſpel." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

Again, p. 232. Mr Shepard ſpeaks of ſuch hypocrites as thoſe, 'who, like ſtrange eggs, being put into the ſame neſt, where honeſt men have lived,

time, make a great profeſſion of love to God, and aſſurance of his favour, and great joy in taſting the ſweetneſs of his love.

After this manner *they* truſted in Chriſt, that the apoſtle Jude ſpeaks of, who *crept in* among the ſaints *unknown;* but were really *ungodly men, turning the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*, Jude 4. Theſe are they that truſt in their being righteous; and becauſe God has promiſed that *the righteous ſhall ſurely live*, or certainly be ſaved, are therefore emboldened to *commit iniquity*, whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii. 13. *When I ſhall ſay to the righteous, that he ſhall ſurely live: if he truſt to his own righteouſneſs, and commit iniquity; all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he ſhall die for it.*

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of ſtone more and more into a heart of fleſh. An holy love and hope are principles that are vaſtly more efficacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of ſin, or whatever might diſpleaſe and offend God, and to engage it to watchfulneſs, and care, and ſtrictneſs, than a ſlaviſh fear of hell. Gracious affections, as was obſerved before, flow out of a contrite heart, or (as the word ſignifies) a

ved, they have been hatched up; and when they are young, keep their neſt, and live by crying and opening their mouths wide after the Lord, and the food of his word; but when their wings are grown, and they have got ſome affections, ſome knowledge, ſome hope of mercy, are hardened thereby to fly from God." And adds, "Can that man be good, whom God's grace makes worſe?"

Again, Part II. p. 167. "When men fly to Chriſt in times of peace, that ſo they may preſerve their ſins with greater peace of conſcience; ſo that ſin makes them fly to Chriſt, as well as miſery; not that they may deſtroy and aboliſh ſin, but that they may be preſerved in their ſins with peace; then men may be ſaid to apprehend Chriſt only by a ſeeming faith.——Many an heart ſecretly ſaith this, If I can have my ſin, and peace, and conſcience quiet for the preſent, and God merciful to pardon it afterward; hence he doth rely (as he ſaith) only on the mercy of God in Chriſt: and now this hardens and blinds him, and makes him ſecure, and his faith is ſermon-proof, nothing ſtirs him.—— And were it not for their faith they ſhould deſpair, but this keeps them up. And now they think if they have any trouble of mind, the devil troubles them; and ſo make Chriſt and faith protectors of ſin, not purifiers from ſin; which is moſt dreadful; turning grace to wantonneſs, as they did ſacrifice. So theſe would ſin under the ſhadow of Chriſt, becauſe the ſhadow is good and ſweet, Mic. iii. 11. They had ſubtile fly ends in good duties; for therein may lie a man's ſin: yet they lean upon the Lord.—When money-changers came into the temple, *You have made it a den of thieves.* Thieves when hunted fly to their den or cave, and there they are ſecure againſt all ſearchers, and hue and cries: ſo here. But Chriſt whipped them out. So when men are purſued with cries and fears of conſcience, away to Chriſt they go as to their den: not as ſaints, to pray and lament out the life of their ſin there; but to preſerve their ſin. This is vile; will the Lord receive ſuch?"

bruiſed

bruiſed heart, bruiſed and broken with godly ſorrow; which makes the heart tender, as bruiſed fleſh is tender, and eaſily hurt. Godly ſorrow has much greater influence to make the heart tender, than mere legal ſorrow from ſelfiſh principles.

The tenderneſs of the heart of a true Chriſtian, is elegantly ſignified by our Saviour, in his comparing ſuch a one to a little child. The fleſh of a little child is very tender: ſo is the heart of one that is new-born. This is repreſented in what we are told of Naaman's cure of his leproſy, by his waſhing in Jordan, by the direction of the prophet; which was undoubtedly a type of the renewing of the ſoul, by waſhing in the laver of regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14. that *he went down, and dipped himſelf ſeven times in Jordan, according to the ſaying of the man of God; and his fleſh came again like unto the fleſh of a little child.* Not only is the fleſh of a little child tender, but his mind is tender. A little child has his heart eaſily moved, wrought upon and bowed: ſo is a Chriſtian in ſpiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with ſympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to ſee others in diſtreſs: ſo it is with a Chriſtian; John xi. 35. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. A little child is eaſily won by kindneſs: ſo is a Chriſtian. A little child is eaſily affected with grief at temporal evils, and has his heart melted, and falls a-weeping: thus tender is the heart of a Chriſtian, with regard to the evil of ſin. A little child is eaſily affrighted at the appearance of outward evils, or any thing that threatens its hurt: ſo is a Chriſtian apt to be alarmed at the appearance of moral evil, and any thing that threatens the hurt of the ſoul. A little child, when it meets enemies, or fierce beaſts, is not apt to truſt its own ſtrength, but flies to its parents for refuge: ſo a ſaint is not ſelf-confident in engaging ſpiritual enemies, but flies to Chriſt. A little child is apt to be ſuſpicious of evil in places of danger, afraid in the dark, afraid when left alone, or far from home: ſo is a ſaint apt to be ſenſible of his ſpiritual dangers, jealous of himſelf, full of fear when he cannot ſee his way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a diſtance from God; Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart, ſhall fall into miſchief.* A little child is apt to be afraid of ſuperiours, and to dread their anger, and tremble at their frowns and threatenings: ſo is a true ſaint with reſpect to God; Pſal. cxix. 120. *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements.* Iſ. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my word.* ver. 5. *Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that*

*tremble at his word.* Ezra ix. 4. *Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel.* chap. x. 3. *According to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God.* A little child approaches superiours with awe: so do the saints approach God with holy awe and reverence; Job xiii. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?* Holy fear is so much the nature of true godliness, that it is called in scripture by no other name more frequently, than the *fear of God.*

Hence gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, forward, noisy and boisterous; but rather to *speak, trembling;* Hos. xiii. 1. *When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died);* and to clothe with a kind of holy fear in all their behaviour towards God and man; agreeable to Psal. ii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 15. 2 Cor. vii. 15. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 2. Rom. xi. 20.

But here some may object and say, Is there no such thing as a holy boldness in prayer, and the duties of divine worship? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent saints, persons of great degrees of faith and love. But this holy boldness is not in the least opposite to *reverence;* though it be to *disunion* and *servility.* It abolishes or lessens that disposition which arises from *moral distance* or *alienation*; and also *distance of relation*, as that of a slave: but not at all, that which becomes the *natural distance*, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No boldness in poor sinful worms of the dust, that have a right sight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less fear and reverence, than spotless and glorious angels in heaven, who cover their faces before his throne, Is. vi. at the beginning. Rebecca, (who in her marriage with Isaac, in almost all its circumstances, was manifestly a great type of the church, the spouse of Christ), when she meets Isaac, lights off from her camel, and takes a vail, and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his bride, to be with him, in the nearest relation, and most intimate union, that mankind are ever united one to another in *. Elijah, that great prophet, who had so much holy familiarity with God, at a time of special nearness to God, even when he conversed with him in the mount, wrapped his face in his mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any servile fear, by the terrible *wind*, and

* Dr Ames, in his Cases of conscience, Book III. chap. iv. speaks of an holy modesty in the worship of God, as one sign of true humility.

*earthquake,*

*earthquake*, and *fire*; but after these were all over, and God spake to him as a friend, *in a still small voice*: 1 Kings xix. 12. 13. *And after the fire, a still small voice; and it was so, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle.* And Moses, with whom God spake face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and was distinguished from all the prophets, in the familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a time when he was brought nearest of all, when God shewed him his glory in that same mount, where he afterwards spake to Elijah, *He made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped*, Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in some persons, a most unsuitable and unsufferable boldness, in their addresses to the great JEHOVAH, in an affectation of an holy boldness, and ostentation of eminent nearness and familiarity; the very thoughts of which would make them shrink into nothing, with horror and confusion, if they saw the distance that is between God and them. They are like the Pharisee, that boldly came up near, in a confidence of his own eminency in holiness. Whereas, if they saw their vileness, they would be more like the publican, that *stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* It becomes such sinful creatures as we, to approach a holy God (although with faith, and without terror, yet) with contrition, and penitent shame and confusion of face. It is foretold that this should be the disposition of the church, in the time of her highest privileges on earth, in her latter day of glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing his covenant-mercy to her; Ezek. xvi. 60. to the end. *I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed.——And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* The woman that we read of in the viith chapter of Luke, that was an eminent saint, and had much of that true love which casts out fear, by Christ's own testimony, ver. 47. she approached Christ in an amiable, and acceptable manner, when she came with that humble modesty, reverence and shame, when she stood at his feet, weeping *behind him*, as not being fit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.

One reason why gracious affections are attended with this tenderness of spirit which has been spoken of, is, that true grace tends to promote convictions of conscience. Persons are wont

to have convictions of conscience before they have any grace: and if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true repentance, and joy, and peace in believing; this has a tendency to put an end to *terrors*, but has no tendency to put an end to *convictions of sin*, but to increase them. It does not stupify a man's conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater conviction of the heinous and dreadful nature of sin, susceptive of a quicker and deeper sense of it, and more convinced of his own sinfulness, and wickedness of his heart; and consequently it has a tendency to make him more jealous of his heart. Grace tends to give the soul a further and better *conviction* of the same things concerning sin, that it was *convinced* of under a legal work of the Spirit of God; *viz.* its great contrariety to the will and law, and honour of God, the greatness of God's hatred of it, and displeasure against it, and the dreadful punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so, but it *convinces* the soul of something further concerning sin, that it saw nothing of, while only under legal *convictions;* and that is the infinitely hateful nature of sin, and its dreadfulness upon that account. And this makes the heart tender with respect to sin; like David's heart, that smote him, when he had cut off Saul's skirt. The heart of a true penitent is like a burnt child, that dreads the fire. Whereas on the contrary, he that has had a counterfeit repentance, and false comforts and joys, is like iron that has been suddenly heat and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience; and so either takes away, or much diminishes that conscientiousness, which was manifested under a work of the law.

All gracious affections have a tendency to promote this Christian tenderness of heart, that has been spoken of: not only a godly sorrow; but also a gracious joy: Psal. ii. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* As also a gracious hope; Psal. xxxiii. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy.* And Psal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* Yea, the most confident and assured hope, that is truly gracious, has this tendency. The higher an holy hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian tenderness. The banishing of a servile fear, by a holy assurance, is attended with a proportionable increase of a reverential fear. The diminishing of the fear of the fruits of God's displeasure in future punishment, is attended with a proportionable increase

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of fear of his displeasure itself; the diminishing of the fear of hell, with an increase of the fear of sin. The vanishing of jealousies of the person's state, is attended with a proportionable increase of jealousy of his heart, in a distrust of its strength, wisdom, stability, faithfulness, &c. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural evil, having *his heart fixed trusting in God*, and so, *not afraid of evil tidings*; the more apt is he to be alarmed with the appearance of moral evil, or the evil of sin. As he has more holy boldness, so he has less of self-confidence, and a forward assuming boldness, and more modesty. As he is more sure than others of deliverance from hell, so he has more of a sense of the desert of it. He is less apt than others to be shaken in faith; but more apt than others to be moved with solemn warnings, and with God's frowns, and with the calamities of others. He has the firmest comfort, but the softest heart: richer than others, but poorest of all in spirit: the tallest and strongest saint, but the least and tendereſt child among them.

X. Another thing wherein those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is *beautiful symmetry and proportion*.

Not that the symmetry of the virtues, and gracious affections of the saints, in this life, is perfect: it oftentimes is in many things defective, through the imperfection of grace, for want of proper instructions, through errors in judgement, or some particular unhappiness of natural temper, or defects in education, and many other disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wise, that monstruous disproportion in gracious affections, and the various parts of true religion in the saints, that is very commonly to be observed, in the false religion, and counterfeit graces of hypocrites.

In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. They have the whole image of Christ upon them: they have *put off the old man*, and have *put on the new man* entire in all his parts and members. *It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell:* there is in him every grace; *he is full of grace and truth:* and they that are Christ's, do *of his fulness receive, and grace for grace;* (John i. 14. 16.) *i. e.* there is every grace in them, which is in Christ: *grace for grace;* that is, grace answerable to grace: there is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it: the image is a true image; and there is something of the same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original;

ginal; there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body, which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: so it is in the new man, consisting of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through distemper, and the weakness and wounds of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those that are born monsters.

It is with hypocrites, as it was with Ephraim of old, at a time when God greatly complains of their hypocrisy; Hos. vii. *Ephraim is a cake not turned*, half roasted and half raw: there is commonly no manner of uniformity in their affections.

There is in many of them a great partiality, with regard to the several kinds of religious affections; great affections in some things, and no manner of proportion in others. An holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints, as has been observed from Psal. xxxiii. 18. and cxlvii. 11. But in some of these is the most confident hope, while they are void of reverence, self-jealousy and caution, and to a great degree cast off fear. In the saints, joy and holy fear go together, though the joy be never so great: as it was with the disciples, in that joyful morning of Christ's resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and* GREAT *joy* *. But many of these rejoice without trembling: their joy is of that sort, that is truly opposite to godly fear.

But particularly, one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin. They have not only sorrow to prepare them for their first comfort, but after they are comforted, and their joy established. As it is foretold of the church of God, that they should mourn and loath themselves for their sins, after they were returned from the captivity, and were settled in the land of Canaan, the land of rest, and the land that flows with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 42. 43. *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been de-*

* "Renewed care and diligence follows the sealings of the Spirit. Now is the soul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, *with fear and great joy*. He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is afraid of a thief in every bush." *Flavel's Sacramental Meditations*, Med. 4.

*filed*,

*filed, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed.* As also in Ezek. xvi. 61. 62. 63. A true saint is like a little child in this respect; he never had any godly sorrow before he was born again; but since has it often in exercise: as a little child, before it is born, and while it remains in darkness, never cries; but as soon as ever it sees the light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, so that we are freed from the *sorrow of punishment*, and may now sweetly feed upon the comforts Christ hath purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these comforts should be attended with the *sorrow of repentance.* As of old, the children of Israel were commanded, evermore to feed upon the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs *. True saints are spoken

* "If repentance accompanies faith, it is no presumption to believe. Many know the sin, and hence believe in Christ, trust in Christ, and there is an end of their faith. But what confession and sorrow for sin? what more love to Christ follows this faith? Truly none. Nay, their faith is the cause why they have none. For they think, if I trust in Christ to forgive me, he will do it; and there is an end of the business. Verily this hedge-faith, this bramble-faith, that catches hold on Christ, and pricks and scratches Christ, by more impenitency, more contempt of him, is mere presumption; which shall one day be burnt up and destroyed by the fire of God's jealousy. Fy upon that faith, that serves only to keep a man from being tormented before his time! Your sins would be your sorrows, but that your faith quiets you. But if faith be accompanied with repentance, mourning for sin, more esteem of God's grace in Christ; so that nothing breaks thy heart more than the thoughts of Christ's unchangeable love to one so vile, and this love makes thee love much, and love him the more; as thy sin increaseth, so thou desirest thy love's increase; and now the stream of thy thoughts run, how thou mayst live to him that died for thee: this was Mary's faith, who sat at Christ's feet weeping, washing them with her tears, and loving much, because much was forgiven." *Shepard's Sound Believer*, p. 128. 129.

"You shall know godly sorrow (says Dr Preston, in his discourse on Paul's conversion) by the continuance of it; it is constant: but worldly sorrow is but a passion of the mind; it changes, it lasts not. Though for the present it may be violent and strong, and work much outwardly; yet it comes but by fits, and continues not: like a land-flood, which violently, for the present, overflows the banks; but it will away again; it is not always thus. But godly sorrow is like a spring, that still keeps his running both winter and summer, wet and dry, in heat and cold, early and late. So this godly sorrow is the same in a regenerate man still; take him when you will, he is still sorrowing for sin. This godly sorrow stands like the centre of the earth, which removes not, but still remains."

"I am persuaded, many a man's heart is kept from breaking and mourning, because of this. He saith (it may be) that he is a vile sinner; but I trust in Christ, *&c.* If they do go to Christ to destroy their sin, this makes them more secure in their sin. For (say they) I cannot help it, and Christ must do all. Whereas faith makes the soul mourn after the Lord the more." *Shepard's Parable of the ten virgins*, Part II. p. 168.

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of in ſcripture, not only as thoſe that have mourned for ſin, but as thoſe that do mourn, whoſe manner it is ſtill to mourn; Matth. v. 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.*

Not only is there often in hypocrites, an eſſential deficiency, as to the various kinds of religious affections; but alſo a ſtrange partiality and diſproportion, in the ſame affections, with regard to different objects.

Thus as to the affection of *love*, ſome make high pretences, and a great ſhew of love to God and Chriſt, and it may be have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: but they have not a ſpirit of love and benevolence towards men, but are diſpoſed to contention, envy, revenge, and evil-ſpeaking; and will, it may be, ſuffer an old grudge to reſt in their boſoms towards a neighbour, for ſeven years together, if not twice ſeven years; living in real ill-will and bitterneſs of ſpirit towards him: and it may be in their dealings with their neighbours, are not very ſtrict and conſcientious in obſerving the rule of *doing to others, as they would that they ſhould do to them:* 1 John iv. 20. *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* And on the other hand, there are others, that appear as if they had a great deal of benevolence to men, are very good-natured and generous in their way; but have no love to God.

And as to love to men, there are ſome that have flowing affections to ſome; but their love is far from being of ſo extenſive and univerſal a nature, as a truly Chriſtian love is. They are full of dear affections to ſome, and full of bitterneſs towards others. They are knit to their own party, them that approve of them, love them and admire them; but are fierce againſt thoſe that oppoſe and diſlike them. Matth. v. 45. 46. *Be like your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good.—For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame?* Some ſhew a great affection to their neighbours, and pretend to be raviſhed with the company of the children of God *abroad*; and at the ſame time are uncomfortable and churliſh towards their wives and other near relations *at home*, and are very negligent of relative duties. And as to the great love to ſinners and oppoſers of religion, and the great concern for their ſouls, that there is an appearance of in ſome, even to extreme diſtreſs and agony, ſingling out a particular perſon, from among a multitude,

tude, for its object, there being at the same time no general compassion to sinners, that are in equally miserable circumstances, but what is in a monstrous disproportion; this seems not to be of the nature of a gracious affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that pity to the perishing souls of sinners should be to a degree of agony, if other things are answerable; or that a truly gracious compassion to souls should be exercised much more to some persons than others that are equally miserable, especially on some particular occasions: there may many things happen to fix the mind, and affect the heart, with respect to a particular person, at such a juncture; and without doubt some saints have been in great distress for the souls of particular persons, so as to be as it were in travail for them: but when persons appear, at particular times, in wracking agonies for the soul of some single person, far beyond what has been usually heard or read of in eminent saints, but appear to be persons that have a spirit of meek and fervent love, charity, and compassion to mankind in general, in a far less degree than they; I say, such agonies are greatly to be suspected, for reasons already given; *viz.* that the Spirit of God is wont to give graces and gracious affections in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards different persons, so there is in their seeming exercises of love towards the same persons. Some men shew a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly substance, and often give to the poor; but have no love to, or concern for the souls of men. Others pretend a great love to mens souls, that are not compassionate and charitable towards their bodies. The making a great shew of love, pity, and distress for souls, costs them nothing; but in order to shew mercy to mens bodies, they must part with money out of their pockets. But a true Christian love to our brethren, extends both to their souls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. He shewed mercy to mens souls, by labouring for them in preaching the gospel to them; and shewed mercy to their bodies, in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. We have a remarkable instance of Christ's having compassion at once both to mens souls and bodies, and shewing compassion by feeding both, in Mark vi. 34. *&c. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

Here was his compaſſion to their ſouls. And in the ſequel, we have an account of his compaſſion to their bodies, becauſe they had been a long while *having nothing to eat:* he fed five thouſand of them with five loaves and two fiſhes. And if the compaſſion of profeſſing Chriſtians towards others does not work in the ſame ways, it is a ſign that it is no true Chriſtian compaſſion.

And furthermore, it is a ſign that affections are not of the right ſort, if perſons ſeem to be much affected with the bad qualities of their fellow-Chriſtians, as the coldneſs and lifeleſſneſs of other ſaints, but are in no proportion affected with their own defects and corruptions. A true Chriſtian may be affected with the coldneſs and unſavourineſs of other ſaints, and may mourn much over it: but at the ſame time, he is not ſo apt to be affected with the badneſs of any body's heart, as his own; this is moſt in his view; this he is moſt quick-ſighted to diſcern; this he ſees moſt of the aggravations of, and is moſt ready to cry out of. And a leſſer degree of virtue will bring him to pity himſelf, and be concerned at his own calamities, than rightly to be affected with others calamities. And if men have not attained to the leſs, we may determine they never attained to the greater.

And here by the way, I would obſerve, that it may be laid down as a general rule, That if perſons pretend that they come to high attainments in religion, but have never yet arrived to the leſſer attainments, it is a ſign of a vain pretence. As if perſons pretend, that they have got beyond mere *morality*, to live a *ſpiritual* and *divine* life; but really have not come to be ſo much as *moral* perſons: or pretend to be greatly affected with the wickedneſs of their hearts, and are not affected with the palpable violations of God's commands in their practice, which is a leſſer attainment: or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the glory of God, but have no forwardneſs to ſuffer a little in their eſtates and names, and worldly convenience, for the ſake of their duty: or pretend that they are not afraid to venture their ſouls upon Chriſt, and commit their all to God, truſting to his bare word, and the faithfulneſs of his promiſes, for their eternal welfare; but at the ſame time, have not confidence enough in God, to dare to truſt him with a little of their eſtates, beſtowed to pious and charitable uſes: I ſay, when it is thus with perſons, their pretences are manifeſtly vain. He that is in a journey, and imagines he has got far beyond ſuch a place in his road, and never yet came to it, muſt be miſtaken; and he is not yet arrived to the

the top of the hill, that never yet got half-way thither. But this by the way.

The ſame that has been obſerved of the affection of *love*, is alſo to be obſerved of *other* religious affections. Thoſe that are true, extend in ſome proportion, to the various things that are their due and proper objects: but when they are falſe, they are commonly ſtrangely diſproportionate. So it is with religious *deſires* and longings: theſe in the ſaints, are to thoſe things that are ſpiritual and excellent in general, and that in ſome proportion to their excellency, importance or neceſſity, or their near concern in them: but in falſe longings, it is often far otherwiſe. They will ſtrangely run, with an impatient vehemence, after ſomething of leſs importance, when other things of greater importance are neglected. Thus for inſtance, ſome perſons, from time to time, are attended with a vehement inclination, and unaccountably violent preſſure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is at the ſame time, no inclination, in any meaſure equal to it, to other things, that true Chriſtianity has as great, yea, a greater tendency to; as the pouring out the ſoul before God in ſecret earneſt prayer and praiſe to him, and more conformity to him, and living more to his glory, *&c.* We read in ſcripture of *groanings that cannot be uttered*, and *ſoul-breakings for the longing it hath*, and *longings, thirſtings, and pantings*, much more frequently to theſe latter things, than the former.

And ſo as to *hatred* and *zeal;* when theſe are from right principles, they are againſt ſin in general, in ſome proportion to the degree of ſinfulneſs; Pſal. cxix. 104. *I hate every falſe way.* So ver. 128. But a falſe hatred and zeal againſt ſin, is againſt ſome particular ſin only. Thus ſome ſeem to be very zealous againſt profaneneſs, and pride in apparel, who themſelves are notorious for covetouſneſs, cloſeneſs, and it may be backbiting, envy towards ſuperiours, turbulency of ſpirit towards rulers, and rooted ill-will to them that have injured them. Falſe zeal is againſt the ſins of others, while men have no zeal againſt their own ſins. But he that has true zeal, exerciſes it chiefly againſt his own ſins; though he ſhews alſo a proper zeal againſt prevailing and dangerous iniquity in others. And ſome pretend to have a great abhorrence of their own ſins of heart, and cry out much of their inward corruption; and yet make light of ſins in practice, and ſeem to commit them without much reſtraint or remorſe; though theſe imply ſin, both in heart and life.

As there is a much greater diſproportion in the exerciſes of

false affections, than of true, as to different objects; so there is also, as to different times. For although true Christians are not always alike; yea, there is very great difference, at different times, and the best have reason to be greatly ashamed of their unsteadiness; yet there is in no wise that instability and inconstancy in the hearts of those who are true *virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, which is in false-hearted professors. The righteous man is truly said to be one *whose heart is fixed, trusting in God*, (Psal. cxii. 7.), and to have *his heart established with grace*, (Heb. xiii. 9.), and to *hold on his way*; Job xvii. 9. *The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.* It is spoken of as a note of the hypocrisy of the Jewish church, that they *were as a swift dromedary, traversing her ways.*

If therefore persons are religious only by fits and starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the clouds in their affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all, and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their manner of carrying on religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in religion, only in extraordinary seasons, in the time of a remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon dispensation of providence, or upon the real or supposed receipt of some great mercy, when they have received some extraordinary temporal mercy, or suppose that they are newly converted, or have lately had what they call a great discovery; but quickly return to such a frame, that their hearts are chiefly upon other things, and the prevailing bent of their hearts and stream of their affections is ordinarily towards the things of this world; when they are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, who had their affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red sea, and sang his praise, and soon fell a lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt; but then again when they came to mount Sinai, and saw the great manifestations God made of himself there, seemed to be greatly engaged again, and mightily forward to enter into covenant with God, saying, *All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient*, but then quickly made them a golden calf; I say, when it is thus with persons, it is a sign of the unsoundness of affections †. They are like the waters in the time of a shower

† Dr Owen (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. ii. § 18.) speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "This work operates greatly on the affections: we have given instances, in fear, sorrow, joy, and delight, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby: but yet it comes short in

ſhower of rain, which during the ſhower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly; but are preſently quite dry: and when another ſhower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true ſaint is like a ſtream from a living ſpring; which though it may be greatly increaſed by a ſhower of rain, and diminiſhed in time of drought, yet conſtantly runs: (John iv. 14. *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up*, &c.): or like a tree planted by ſuch a ſtream, that has a conſtant ſupply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greateſt drought; Jer. xvii. 7. 8. *Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is. For he ſhall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that ſpreadeth out her roots by the river, and ſhall not ſee when heat cometh, but her leaf ſhall be green, and ſhall not be careful in the year of drought, neither ſhall ceaſe from yielding fruit.* Many hypocrites are like comets, that appear for a

in two things, of a thorough work upon the affections themſelves. For, 1*ſt*, It doth not *fix* them. And, 2*dly*, It doth not *fill* them. 1. It is required that our affections be fixed on heavenly and ſpiritual things: and true grace will effect it; Col. iii. 1. 2. *If ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above.* The joys, the fears, the hopes, the ſorrows, with reference unto ſpiritual and eternal things, which the work before mentioned doth produce, are evanid, uncertain, unſtable, not only as to the degrees, but as to the very being of them. Sometimes they are as a river ready to overflow its banks, men cannot but be pouring them out on all occaſions; and ſometimes as waters that fail, no drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, and ſometimes cold; ſometimes up, and ſometimes down; ſometimes all heaven, and ſometimes all world; without equality, without ſtability. But true grace fixeth the affections on ſpiritual things. As to the degrees of their exerciſe, there may be, and is in them a great variety, according as they may be excited, aided, aſſiſted by grace and the means of it; or obſtructed and impeded, by the interpoſition of temptations and diverſions. But the conſtant bent and inclination of renewed affections, is unto ſpiritual things; as the ſcripture every where teſtifieth, and as experience doth confirm."

"There is (ſays Dr Preſton) a certain love, by fits, which God accepts not; when men come and offer to God great promiſes, like the waves of the ſea, as big as mountains: Oh, they think, they will do much for God! But their minds change; and they become as thoſe high waves, which at laſt fall level with the other waters. If a man ſhould profer thee great kindneſſes; and thou ſhouldſt afterwards come to him to make uſe of him, and he ſhould look ſtrangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with thee; how wouldſt thou eſteem of ſuch love? If we are now on, now off, in our love, God will not eſteem of ſuch love." *Diſcourſe on the divine love of Chriſt.*

Mr Flavel, ſpeaking of theſe changeable profeſſors, ſays, "Theſe profeſſors have more of the moon than of the ſun; little light, leſs heat, and many changes. They deceive many, yea, they deceive themſelves, but cannot deceive God. They want that ballaſt and eſtabliſhment in themſelves, that would have kept them tight and ſteady." *Touchſtone of ſincerity*, chap. ii. § 2.

while

while with a mighty blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion, (and are therefore called wandering stars, Jude 13.), and their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But the true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are stedfast in their orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant light. Hypocritical affections are like a violent motion; like that of the air that is moved with winds, (Jude 12.) But gracious affections are more a natural motion; like the stream of a river, which though it has many turns hither and thither, and may meet with obstacles, and run more freely and swiftly in some places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant course, tends the same way, until it gets to the ocean.

And as there is a strange unevenness and disproportion in false affections, at different *times*; so there often is in different *places*. Some are greatly affected from time to time, when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it, in secret, in close meditation, secret prayer, and conversing with God, when alone, and separated from all the world *. A true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship, and Christian conversation, and finds much to affect his heart in it; but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitary places. And this also has its peculiar advantages for fixing his heart, and engaging its affections. True religion disposes persons to be much alone, in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer. So it wrought in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into mountains and solitary places, for holy converse with his Father? It is difficult to conceal great affections,

* "The Lord is neglected secretly, yet honoured openly; because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails; and therefore there they stand still. Hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection. They have by the one a name to live, (and that is enough), though their hearts be dead. And hence so long as you love and commend them, so long they love you; but if not, they will forsake you. They were warm only by another's fire, and hence having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 180.

"The hypocrite (says Mr Flavel) is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Matth. vi. 5. 6. It is not his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world, to enjoy God in secret." *Touchstone of sincerity*, Chap. vii. § 2.

Dr Ames, in his Cases of conscience, Lib. III. Chap. v. speaks of it as a thing by which sincerity may be known, "That persons be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on; in secret, as well, yea more than in public;" alledging Phil. ii. 12. and Matth. vi. 6.

but

but yet gracious affections are of a much more silent and secret nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious sorrow of the saints. So it is with their sorrow for their own sins †. Thus the future gracious mourning of true penitents, at the beginning of the latter-day glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the companions of their bosom; Zech. xii. 12. 13. 14. *And the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart: all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.* So it is with their sorrow for the sins of others. The saints pains and travailing for the souls of sinners is chiefly in secret places; Jer. xiii. 17. *If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.* So it is with gracious joys: they are *hidden manna*, in this respect, as well as others, Rev. ii. 17. The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest comforts, as those that were to be had in secret; Psal. lxiii. 5. 6. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* Christ calls forth his spouse, away from the world, into retired places, that he may give her his sweetest love; Cant. vii. 11. 12. *Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages:—there will I give thee my loves.* The most eminent divine favours that the saints obtained, that we read of in scripture, were in their retirement. The principal manifestations that God made of himself, and his covenant-mercy to Abraham, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his history. Isaac received that special gift of God to him, Rebekah, who was so great a comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promised seed, walking alone, meditating in the field. Jacob was retired for secret prayer, when Christ came to him, and he wrestled with him, and obtained the blessing. God revealed himself to Moses in the bush, when he was in a solitary place in the desert, in mount Horeb, Exod. iii. at the beginning.

† Mr Flavel, in reckoning up those things, wherein the sorrow of saints is distinguished from the sorrow of hypocrites, about their sins, says, "Their troubles for sin are more private and silent troubles than others are; their sore runs in the night." *Touchstone of sincerity*, Chap. vi. § 5.

And

And afterwards, when God ſhewed him his glory, and he was admitted to the higheſt degree of communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the ſame mountain, and continued there forty days and forty nights, and then came down with his face ſhining. God came to thoſe great prophets, Elijah and Eliſha, and converſed freely with them, chiefly in their retirement. Elijah converſed alone with God at mount Sinai, as Moſes did. And when Jeſus Chriſt had his greateſt prelibation of his future glory, when he was tranſfigured; it was not when he was with the multitude, or with the twelve diſciples, but retired into a ſolitary place in a mountain, with only three ſelect diſciples, charging them that they ſhould tell no man, until he was riſen from the dead. When the angel Gabriel came to the bleſſed virgin, and when the Holy Ghoſt came upon her, and the power of the Higheſt overſhadowed her, ſhe ſeems to have been alone, and to be in this matter hid from the world; her neareſt and deareſt earthly friend Joſeph, that had betrothed her, (though a juſt man), knew nothing of the matter. And ſhe that firſt partook of the joy of Chriſt's reſurrection, was alone with Chriſt at the ſepulchre, John xx. And when the beloved diſciple was favoured with thoſe wonderful viſions of Chriſt, and his future diſpenſations towards the church and the world, he was alone in the iſle of Patmos. Not but that we have alſo inſtances of great privileges that the ſaints have received when with others; or that there is not much in Chriſtian converſation, and ſocial and public worſhip, tending greatly to refreſh and rejoice the hearts of the ſaints. But this is all that I aim at by what has been ſaid, to ſhew that it is the nature of true grace, that however it loves Chriſtian ſociety in its place, yet it in a peculiar manner delights in retirement, and ſecret converſe with God. So that if perſons appear greatly engaged in ſocial religion, and but little in the religion of the cloſet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Chriſt to converſe with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.

XI. Another great and very diſtinguiſhing difference between gracious affections and others is, that gracious affections the higher they are raiſed, the more is a ſpiritual appetite and longing of ſoul after ſpiritual attainments increaſed. On the contrary, falſe affections reſt ſatisfied in themſelves *.

The

* "Truly there is no work of Chriſt that is right, (ſays Mr Shepard), but it carries the ſoul to long for more of it." *Parable of the ten virgins*, Part I. p. 136. And again, "There is in true grace an

The more a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his want of love to him: the more he hates sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining love to it: the more he mourns for sin, the more he longs to mourn for sin; the more his heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke: the more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very soul in longings after God: the kindling and raising of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn. So that the spiritual appetite after holiness, and an increase of holy affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in holiness, than others; and more when grace and holy affections are in their most lively exercise, than at other times. It is as much the nature of one that is spiritually new-born, to thirst after growth in holiness, as it is the nature of a new-born babe, to thirst after the mother's breast; who has the sharpest appetite, when best in health; 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. *As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* The most that the saints have in this world, is but a taste, a prelibation of that future glory which is their proper fulness; it is only an earnest of their future inheritance in their hearts; 2 Cor. i. 22. and v. 5. and Eph. i. 14. The most eminent saints in this state are but children, compared with their future, which is their proper state of maturity and perfection; as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. 11. The greatest eminency and perfection, that the saints arrive to in this world, has no tendency to satiety, or to abate their desires after more; but, on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the apostle's words, Phil. iii. 13. 14. 15. *Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those*

an infinite circle: a man by thirsting receives, and receiving thirsts for more. But hence the Spirit is not poured out abundantly on churches; because men shut it out, by shutting in, and contenting themselves with their common graces and gifts; Matth. vii. 29. Examine if it be not so." *Ibid.* p. 182.

And in p. 210. he says, "This I say, True grace as it comforts, so it never fills, but puts an edge on the appetite: more of that grace, Lord! Thus Paul, Phil. iii. 13. 14. Thus David, *Out of my poverty I have given,* &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 3. 17. 18. It is a sure way never to be deceived in lighter strokes of the Spirit, to be thankful for any, but to be content with no measure of it. And this cuts the thread of difference, between a superficial lighter stroke of the Spirit, and that which is sound."

*things which are before, I press toward the mark.—Let us therefore, as many as be* PERFECT, *be thus minded.*

The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the excellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holiness. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be; and so the more do they see their need of grace; as I shewed at large before, when speaking of the nature of evangelical humiliation. And besides, grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing nature, and in a growing state. And we see it to be so with all living things, that while they are in a state of imperfection, and in their growing state, their nature seeks after growth; and so much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the cry of every true grace, is like that cry of true faith, Mark ix. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* And the greater spiritual discoveries and affections the true Christian has, the more does he become of an earnest beggar for grace, and spiritual food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the use of proper means and endeavours; for true and gracious longings after holiness, are no idle ineffectual desires.

But here some may object and say, How is this consistent with what all allow, that spiritual enjoyments are of a soul-satisfying nature?

I answer, its being so, will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been said, if it be considered in what manner spiritual enjoyments are said to be of a soul-satisfying nature. Certainly they are not so in that sense, that they are of so cloying a nature, that he who has any thing of them, though but in a very imperfect degree, desires no more. But spiritual enjoyments are of a soul-satisfying nature in the following respects. 1. They in their kind and nature, are fully adapted to the nature, capacity and need of the soul of man. So that those who find them, desire *no other kind* of enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that kind of happiness which they have, desiring no change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying, *Who will shew us any good?* the soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its powers, to this happiness. But not that those who have something of this happiness, desire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this respect, that they answer the expectation of the appetite. When the appetite is high to any thing,

thing, the expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular object, implies expectation in its nature. This expectation is not satisfied by worldly enjoyments, the man expected to have a great accession of happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual enjoyments; they fully answer and satisfy the expectation. 3. The gratification and pleasure of spiritual enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with worldly enjoyments. They in a sense satisfy particular appetites: but the appetite in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the pleasure is over: and as soon as that is over, the general appetite of human nature after happiness returns; but is empty, and without any thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular appetite, does but take away from, and leave empty, the general thirst of nature. 4. Spiritual good is satisfying, as there is enough in it to satisfy the soul, as to degree, if obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying faculty duly applied. There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean of it. If men be not satisfied here, in degree of happiness, the cause is with themselves; it is because they do not open their mouths wide enough.

But these things do not argue that a soul has no appetite excited after more of the same, that has tasted a little; or that his appetite will not increase, the more he tastes, until he comes to fulness of enjoyment: as bodies that are attracted to the globe of the earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the centre. Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fulness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparallelled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affections, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holiness.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great desire, of some sort, after grace; as these affections rise, *that* desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, and faith in Christ, and love to God: but now, when these false affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his state good,

there are no more earneſt longings after light and grace; for his end is anſwered; he is confident that his ſins are forgiven him, and that he ſhall go to heaven; and ſo he is ſatisfied. And eſpecially when falſe affections are raiſed very high, do they put an end to longings after grace and holineſs. The man now is far from appearing to himſelf a poor empty creature; on the contrary, he is rich, and increaſed with goods, and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent, than what he has already attained to.

Hence there is an end to many perſons earneſtneſs in ſeeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their converſion; or at leaſt, after they have had thoſe high affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themſelves as in a ſtate of nature, they were engaged in ſeeking after God and Chriſt, and cried earneſtly for grace, and ſtrove in the uſe of means: but now they act as though they thought their work was done; they live upon their firſt work, or ſome high experiences that are paſt; and there is an end to their crying, and ſtriving after God and grace *.

Whereas

* "It is uſual to ſee a falſe heart moſt diligent in ſeeking the Lord, when he has been worſt, and moſt careleſs when it is beſt. Hence many at firſt converſion, ſought the Lord earneſtly: afterwards affections and endeavours die; that now they are as good as the word can make them.—An hypocrite's laſt end is to ſatisfy himſelf: hence he has enough. A ſaint's is to ſatisfy Chriſt: hence he never has enough." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 157.

"Many a man, it may be, may ſay, I have nothing in myſelf, and all is in Chriſt; and comfort himſelf there; and ſo falls aſleep. Hands off! and touch not this ark, leſt the Lord ſlay thee: a Chriſt of clouts would ſerve your turn as well." *Ibid.* p. 71.

"An hypocrite's light goes out, and grows not. Hence many ancient ſtanders take all their comfort from their firſt work, and droop when in old age." *Ibid.* p. 77.

And p. 93. 94. Mr Shepard, mentioning the characters of thoſe that have a dead hope, ſays, "They that content themſelves with any meaſure of holineſs and grace, they look not for Chriſt's coming and company. For ſaints that do look for him, though they have not that holineſs and grace they would have, yet they reſt not ſatisfied with any meaſure; 1 John iii. 3. *He that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf as he is pure.*—The ſaints content not themſelves with any dreſſings, until made glorious; and ſo fit for fellowſhip with that ſpouſe.—When a man leaves not, until he gets ſuch a meaſure of faith and grace, and now when he has got this, contents himſelf with this, as a good ſign that he ſhall be ſaved, he looks not for Chriſt. Or when men are heavily laden with ſin; then cloſe with Chriſt; and then are comforted, ſealed, and have joy that fills them; and now the work is done.—And when men ſhall not content themſelves with any meaſure; but wiſh they had more, if grace would grow, while they tell clocks and ſit idle; and ſo God muſt do all; but do not purge themſelves, and make work of it."

Again, p. 109. "There is never a hypocrite living, but cloſeth with Chriſt for his own ends: for he cannot work beyond his principle. Now when men have ſerved their own turns out of another man, away they go, and

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Whereas the holy principles that actuate a true saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than servile fear. Hence seeking God is spoken of as one of the distinguishing characters of the saints; and *those that seek God*, is one of the names by which the godly are called in scripture; Psal. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.* Psal. lxix. 6. *Let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake.* ver. 32. *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.* And lxx. 4. *Let all those that seek thee, rejoice, and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* And the scriptures every where represent the seeking, striving and labour of a Christian, as being chiefly after his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work. And almost all that is said in the New Testament, of mens watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set before them, striving and agonizing, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armour of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sin-

keep that which they have. An hypocrite closeth with Christ, as a man with a rich shop; he will not be at cost to buy all the shop, but so much as serves his turn. Commonly men in horror, seek so much of Christ as will ease them; and hence profess, and hence seek for so much of Christ as will credit them; and hence their desires after Christ are soon satisfied. *Appetitus finis est infinitus.*"

Wo to thee that canst paint such a Christ in thy head, and receive such a Christ into thy heart, as must be a pander to your sloth. The Lord will revenge this wrong done to his glory, with greater sorrows than ever any felt: to make Christ not only meat and drink to feed, but cloaths to cover your sloth.---Why what can we do? what can we do?---Why as the first Adam conveys not only guilt, but power; so the second conveys both righteousness and strength." *Ibid.* p. 158.

"When the Lord hath given some light and affection, and some comfort and some reformation, now a man grows full here. Saints do for God; and carnal hearts do something too; but a little fils them, and quiets them, and so damns them. And hence men at the first work upon them, are very diligent in the use of means; but after that, they be brought to neglect prayer, sleep out sermons, and to be careless, sapless, lifeless."——*Ibid.* p. 210.

"It is an argument of want of grace, when a man saith to himself, as the glutton said to his soul, *Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years.* So thou hast repentance and grace, and peace enough *for many years:* and hence the soul takes its rest, grows sluggish and negligent. Oh, if you die in this case, this night thy soul shall be taken away to hell." *Ibid.* p. 227.

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ners seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange antiscriptural way, of having all their striving and wrestling over before they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to sit down and enjoy their sloth and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord *fills the hungry with good things, these rich* are like to be *sent away empty*, Luke i. 53.

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only false affections, who will think they are able to stand this trial; and will readily say, that they desire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward, they do desire more, they long after God and Christ, and desire more holiness, and do seek it. But the truth is, their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it; but only for by-ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls; or because in great discoveries, self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others; they long to taste the love of God, (as they call it), more than to have more love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind of forced, fancied or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwise it will be a dark sign upon them. But such things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man, after God and holiness. There is an inward burning desire that a saint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature, as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature, as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or sanctification is more directly the object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favour. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite; John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* Where we read in scripture of the desires, longings and thirstings of the saints, righteousness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing else. The saints *desire the sincere milk of the word*, not so much to testify God's love to them, as *that they may grow thereby* in holiness. I have shewn before, that holiness is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual

ſpiritual taſte, is alſo the chief object of a ſpiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treaſure; Iſ. xxxiii. 6. *The fear of the Lord is his treaſure.* Godlineſs is the gain that he is covetous and greedy of, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for diſcoveries, more for the preſent comfort of the diſcovery, and the high manifeſtation of God's love in it, than for any ſanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great diſcoveries, or after great taſtes of the love of God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any meaſure ſo diſtinguiſhing marks of true ſaints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

But I am come now to the laſt diſtinguiſhing mark of holy affections that I ſhall mention.

XII. Gracious and holy affections have their exerciſe and fruit in Chriſtian practice.——I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the ſubject of them, that they cauſe that a practice, which is univerſally conformed to, and directed by Chriſtian rules, ſhould be the practice and buſineſs of his life.

This implies three things; 1. That his behaviour or practice in the world, be univerſally conformed to, and directed by Chriſtian rules. 2. That he makes a buſineſs of ſuch a holy practice above all things; that it be a buſineſs which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and purſues with higheſt earneſtneſs and diligence: ſo that he may be ſaid to make this practice of religion eminently *his work and buſineſs.* And, 3. That he perſiſts in it to the end of life: ſo that it may be ſaid, not only to be his buſineſs at certain ſeaſons, the buſineſs of Sabbath-days, or certain extraordinary times, or the buſineſs of a month, or a year, or of ſeven years, or his buſineſs under certain circumſtances; but the *buſineſs of his life;* it being that buſineſs which he perſeveres in through all changes, and under all trials, as long as he lives.

The neceſſity of each of theſe, in all true Chriſtians, is moſt clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

1. It is neceſſary that men ſhould be univerſally obedient *: 1 John

* "He that pretends to godlineſs, and turns aſide to crooked ways, is an hypocrite: for thoſe that are really godly, do live in a way of obedience; Pſal. cxix. 1. 2. 3. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the law of the Lord. They alſo do no iniquity.* Luke i. 6. *They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blameleſs.* But ſuch as live in ways of ſin, are diſſemblers; for all ſuch will be rejected in the day of

1 John iii. 3. &c. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.——And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen*

of judgement; Matth. vii. 23. *Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* The like we have Luke xiii. 27. If men live in a way of disobedience, they do not love God; for love will make men keep God's commandments; 1 John v. 3. "Herein is love, that we keep "his commandments: and his com-"mandments are not grievous." If men live in a way of disobedience, they have not a spirit of faith: for faith sanctifies men; Acts xxvi. 18. "Sanctified by faith that is in me." If men live in a way of disobedience, they are not Christ's sheep; for his sheep hear his voice; John x. 27. Men that live in a way of disobedience are not born of God; 1 John iii. 9. "He "that is born of God, sinneth not." Men that live in a way of disobedience are the servants of sin; John viii. 34. "He that committeth sin, is the ser-"vant of sin."—A course of external sin is an evidence of hypocrisy; whether it be a sin of omission or commission. If men live in the neglect of known duties, or in the practice of known evils, that will be their condemnation; let the sin be what it will; let it be profaneness, uncleanness, lying, or injustice.——If men allow themselves in malice, envy, wanton thoughts, profane thoughts, that will condemn them; though those corruptions do not break out in any scandalous way. These thoughts are an evidence of a rotten heart; Tit. iii. 3. "We our-"selves were sometimes foolish, dis-"obedient, deceived, serving divers "lusts and pleasures, living in malice "and envy, hateful, and hating one "another" If a man allows himself, though he thinks he doth not, in malice and envy, he is an hypocrite: though his conscience disallows it, yet if his heart allows it, he is no saint.—Some make pretences to godliness, whereby they do not only deceive others, but (which is a great deal worse) deceive themselves also: but this will condemn them, that they live in a course of sin, and so must go with ungodly men; Psal. cxxv. 5. "As for "such as turn aside unto their crook-"ed ways, the Lord will lead them "forth with the workers of iniquity." If there be a great change in a man's carriage, and he be reformed in several particulars, yet if there be one evil way, the man is an ungodly man: where there is piety there is universal obedience. A man may have great infirmities, yet be a godly man. So it was with Lot, David, and Peter: but if he lives in a way of sin, he does not render his godliness only suspicious, but it is full evidence against him. Men that are godly have respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. There be a great many commands, and if there be one of them that a man has not respect unto, he will be put to shame another day. If a man lives in one evil way, he is not subject to God's authority: but then he lives in rebellion; and that will take off all his pleas, and at once cut off all his pretences; and he will be condemned in the day of judgement.—One way of sin is exception enough against the man's salvation. Though the sin that he lives in be but small: such persons will not be guilty of perjury, stealing, drunkenness, fornication; they look upon them to be heinous things, and they are afraid of them; but they do not much matter it, if they oppress a little in a bargain, if they commend a thing too much when they are about to sell it, if they break a promise, if they spend the Sabbath unprofitably, if they neglect secret prayer, if they talk rudely and reproach others; they think these are but small things: if they can keep clear of great transgression, they hope that God will not insist upon small things. But indeed all the commands of God are established by divine authority: a small shot may kill a man,

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*ſeen him, neither known him.—He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth ſin, is of the devil.* Chap. v. 18. *We know that whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* John xv. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.* James ii. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,* &c. *ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19. 20. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Which is as much as to ſay, they that do any ſort of wickedneſs. Job xxxi. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. *Is not deſtruction to the wicked? and a ſtrange puniſhment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps? Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity. If my ſtep hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands,* &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 15. *If he walk in the ſtatutes of life, without committing iniquity, he ſhall ſurely live.* If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell, Matth. v. 29. 30. Saul was commanded to ſlay all God's enemies, the Amalekites; and he ſlew all but Agag, and the ſaving him alive proved his ruin. Caleb and Joſhua entered into God's promiſed reſt, becauſe they *wholly* followed the Lord, Numb. xiv. 24. and xxxii. 11. 12. Deut. i. 36. Joſh. xiv. 6. 8 9. 14. Naaman's hypocriſy appeared in that, however he ſeemed to be greatly affected with gratitude to God for healing his leproſy, and engaged to ſerve him, yet in one

as well as a cannon-bullet: a ſmall leak may ſink a ſhip. If a man lives in ſmall ſins, that ſhews he has no love to God, no ſincere care to pleaſe and honour God. Little ſins are of a damning nature, as well as great: if they do not deſerve ſo much puniſhment as greater, yet they do deſerve damnation. There is a contempt of God in all ſins; Matth. v. 19. "He "that ſhall break one of the leaſt of "theſe commands, and ſhall teach "men ſo, ſhall be called the leaſt in "the kingdom of God." Prov. xix. 16. "He that keepeth the command- "ment, keepeth his own ſoul; but "he that deſpiſeth his way, ſhall die." If a man ſays, this is a great command, and ſo lays weight on it, and another is a little commandment, and ſo does not regard it, but will allow himſelf to break it, he is in a perilhing condition" *Stoddard's Way to know ſincerity and hypocriſy.*

thing he desired to be excused. And Herod, though he feared John, and observed him, and heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved Herodias. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes, sins that most easily beset them, and which they are most exposed to by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As Joseph would not make known himself to his brethren, who had sold him, until Benjamin the beloved child of the family, that was most hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those that we have the greatest aversion to.

And it is of importance, that it should be observed, that in order to a man's being truly said to be universally obedient, his obedience must not only consist in *negatives*, or in universally avoiding wicked practices, consisting in sins of commission; but he must also be universal in the *positives* of religion. Sins of omission are as much breaches of God's commands, as sins of commission. Christ, in Matth. xxv. represents those on the left hand, as being condemned and cursed to everlasting fire, for sins of omission, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c.* A man therefore cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian conversation, only because he is no thief, nor oppressor, nor fraudulent person, nor drunkard, nor tavern-haunter, nor whoremaster, nor rioter, nor night-walker, nor unclean, nor profane in his language, nor slanderer, nor liar, nor furious, nor malicious, nor reviler: he is falsely said to be of a conversation that becomes the gospel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent walk and conversation. Without such things as these, he does not obey the laws of Christ, and laws that he and his apostles did abundantly insist on, as of greatest importance and necessity.

2. In order to mens being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the business of religion, and the service of God with great earnestness and diligence, as the work which they devote themselves to, and make the main business of their lives. All Christ's *peculiar people*, not only do good works, but

but are *zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. No man can do the service of two masters at once. They that are God's true servants, do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength; Phil. iii. 13. *This one thing I do.* Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labour in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great and laborious service. All true Christians comply with this call, (as is implied in its being an effectual call), and do the work of Christians; which is every where in the New Testament compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to exert their strength, with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and *fight the good fight of faith:* for none but those who do so, do ever *lay hold on eternal life.* Those who *fight as those that beat the air*, never win the crown of victory. *They that run in a race, run all; but one wins the prize*; and they that are slack and negligent in their course, do not *so run, as that they may obtain.* The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken but by violence. Without earnestness there is no getting along, in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happiness which it leads to. Without earnest labour, there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion; and so no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. Without a constant laboriousness, there is no stemming the swift stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life, that is at the head of it. There is need that we should *watch and pray always*, in order to our *escaping those* dreadful *things*, that are coming on the ungodly, and our *being counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.* There is need of our *putting on the whole armour of God, and doing all to stand*, in order to our avoiding a total overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by the *fiery darts of the devil.* There is need that we should *forget the things that are behind*, and *be reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*, in order to our obtaining that prize. Slothfulness in the service of God, in his professed servants, is as damning, as open rebellion: for the *slothful servant*, is a *wicked servant*, and shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies, Matth. xxv. 26. 30. They that are *slothful*, are not *followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*; Heb. vi. 11. 12. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same*

*diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* And all they who follow *that cloud of witnesses* that are gone before to heaven, do *lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets them, and do run with patience the race that is set before them*, Heb. xii. 1. That true faith, by which persons rely on the righteousness of Christ, and the work that he hath done for them, and do truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with such a spirit of earnestness in the Christian work and course. Which was typified of old, by the manner of the children of Israel's feeding on the paschal lamb; who were directed to eat it, as those that were in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand; Exod. xii. 11. *And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover.*

3. Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life. That all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be endless. I shall content myself with referring to some in the margin *.

But *that*, in perseverance in obedience, which is chiefly insisted on in the scripture, as a special note of the truth of grace, is the continuance of professors in the practice of their duty, and being stedfast in an holy walk, through the various *trials* that they meet with.

By *trials* here, I mean, those things that occur, and that a professor meets with in his course, that do especially render his continuance in his duty, and faithfulness to God, difficult to nature. These things are from time to time called in scripture by the name of *trials*, or *temptations*, (which are words of the

* Deut. v. 29. Deut. xxxii. 18 19. 20. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. lxxviii. 7. 8. 10. 11. 35. 36. 37. 41. 42. 56. *&c.* Psal. cvi. 3. 12.—15. Psal. cxxv. 4. 5. Prov. xxvi. 11. Isa. lxiv. 5. Jer. xvii. 13. Ezek. iii. 20. and xviii. 24. and xxxiii. 12. 13. Matth. x. 22. and xiii. 4.—8. with verses 19.—23 and xxv. 8. and xxiv. 12. 13. Luke ix. 62. and xii. 35. *&c.* and xxii. 28. and xvii. 32. John viii. 30. 31. and xv. 6. 7. 8. 10. 16. Rom. ii. 7. and xi. 22. Col. i. 22. 23. Heb. iii. 6. 12. 14. and vi. 11. 12. and x. 35. *&c.* James i 25. Rev. ii. 13 26. and ii. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 4.—8.

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ſame ſignification). Theſe are of various kinds: there are many things that render perſons continuance in the way of their duty difficult, by their tendency to cheriſh and foment, or to ſtir up and provoke their luſts and corruptions. Many things make it hard to continue in the way of duty, by their being of an alluring nature, and having a tendency to entice perſons to ſin; or by their tendency to take off reſtraints, and embolden them in iniquity. Other things are trials of the ſoundneſs and ſtedfaſtneſs of profeſſors, by their tendency to make their duty appear terrible to them, and ſo to affright and drive them from it: ſuch as the ſufferings which their duty will expoſe them to; pain, ill-will, contempt, and reproach, or loſs of outward poſſeſſions and comforts. If perſons, after they have made a profeſſion of religion, live any conſiderable time in this world, which is ſo full of changes, and ſo full of evil, it cannot be otherwiſe, than that they ſhould meet with many trials of their ſincerity and ſtedfaſtneſs. And beſides, it is God's manner, in his providence, to bring trials on his profeſſing friends and ſervants deſignedly, that he may manifeſt them, and may exhibit ſufficient matter of conviction of the ſtate which they are in, to their own conſciences; and oftentimes, to the world. As appears by innumerable ſcriptures; ſome are referred to the margin *.

True ſaints may be guilty of ſome kinds and degrees of backſliding, and may be foiled by particular temptations, and may fall into ſin, yea great ſins: but they can never fall away ſo, as to grow weary of religion, and the ſervice of God, and habitually to diſlike it and neglect it, either on its own account, or on account of the difficulties that attend it; as is evident by Gal. vi. 9. Rom. ii. 7. Heb. x. 36. Iſ. xliii. 22. Mal. i. 13. They can never backſlide, ſo as to continue no longer in a *way* of univerſal obedience; or ſo, that it ſhall ceaſe to be their *manner* to obſerve all the rules of Chriſtianity, and do all duties required, even the moſt difficult, and in the moſt difficult circumſtances †. This is abundantly manifeſt by the things that have

* Gen. xxii. 1. Exod. xv. 25. and xvi. 4. Deut. viii. 2. 15. 16. and xiii. 3. Judg. ii. 22. and iii. 1. 4. Job xxiii. 10. Pſal. lxvi. 10. 11. Ezek. iii. 20. Dan. xii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Matth. viii. 19. 20. and xviii. 21. 22. Luke i. 35. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 2 Cor. viii. 8. Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 12. 1 John ii. 19. Heb. xi. 17. Rev. iii. 10.

† "One way of ſin is exception enough againſt mens ſalvation, though their temptations be great. Some perſons delight in iniquity; they take pleaſure in rudeneſs, and intemperate practices: but there be others, that do not delight in ſin; when they can handſomely avoid it, they do not chuſe it; except they be under ſome great neceſſity, they will not do it. They are afraid to ſin; they think it is

have been observed already. Nor can they ever fall away so, as habitually to be more engaged in other things, than in the business of religion; or so that it should become their way and manner to serve something else more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with such earnestness and diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the business of religion; unless those words of Christ can fall to the ground, *Ye cannot serve two masters*, and those of the apostle, *He that will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*; and unless a saint can change his God, and yet be a true saint. Nor can a true saint ever fall away so, that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behaviour since his conversion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new men, new creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body; old things are passed away, all things are become new; they have new hearts, and new eyes, new ears, new tongues, new hands, new feet; *i. e.* a new conversation and practice; and they walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of life. And they that fall away, and cease visibly to do so, it is a sign they never were risen with Christ *. And especially when mens opinion of their being

is dangerous, and have some care to avoid it: but sometimes they force themselves to sin; they are reduced to difficulties, and cannot tell how well to avoid it; it is a dangerous thing not to do it. If Naaman do not bow himself in the house of Rimmon, the king will be in a rage with him, take away his office, it may be take away his life, and so he complies; 2 Kings v. 18.—So Jeroboam forced himself to set up the calves at Dan and Bethel: he thought that if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship, they would return to Rehoboam, and kill him; therefore he must think of some expedient to deliver himself in this strait; 1 Kings xii. 27. 28. He was driven by appearing necessity to take this wicked course.—So the stony-ground hearers were willing to retain the profession of the true religion; but the case was such, that they thought they could not well do it; Matth. xiii. 21. *When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended*—So Achan and Gehazi had singular opportunities to get an estate; if they live twenty years they are not like to have such an advantage; and they force themselves to borrow a point, and break the law of God. They lay a necessity on estate, and liberty, and life, but not upon obedience. If a man be willing to serve God in ordinary cases, but excuse himself when there be great difficulties, he is not godly. It is a small matter to serve God when men have no temptation; but Lot was holy in Sodom, Noah was righteous in the old world Temptations try men, but they do not force men to sin: and grace will establish the heart in a day of temptation. They are blessed that do endure temptation, James i. 12. But they are cursed that fall away in a day of temptation." *Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrisy.*

* ⁂ Hence we learn what verdict to pass and give in, concerning those men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never had oil in the vessel; never had a dram of grace in their heart.

ing converted, and so in a safe estate, is the very cause of their coming to this, it is a most evident sign of their hypocrisy †. And that, whether their falling away be into their former sins, or into some new kind of wickedness, having the corruption of nature only turned into a new channel, instead of its being mortified. As when persons that think themselves converted, though they do not return to former profaneness and lewdness; yet from the high opinion they have of their experiences, graces and privileges, gradually settle more and more in a self-righteous and spiritually proud temper of mind, and in such a manner of behaviour and conversation, as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with men, however far they may seem to be from their former evil practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their last state far worse than the first. For this seems to be the very case of the Jews of that generation that Christ speaks of, Matth. xii. 43. 44. 45. who having been awakened by John the baptist's preaching, and brought to a reformation of their former licentious courses, whereby the unclean spirit was as it were turned out, and the house swept and garnished; yet being *empty* of God and of grace, became full of themselves, and were exalted in an exceeding high opinion of their own righteousness and eminent holiness, and became habituated to an answerably self-exalting behaviour; so changing the sins of publicans and harlots, for those of the Pharisees; and in the issue, had seven devils, worse than the first.

heart. Thus 1 John ii. 19. *If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* It seems they were such men, which were so eminent and excellent, as that there were no brands nor marks upon them, to give notice to the churches, that they were marked out for apostacy; but were only discovered to be unsound, by their apostacy; and this was argument good enough." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 226.

† "When a man's rising is the cause of his fall, or seals a man up in his fall, or at least the cause through his corruption. *Ex. Gr.* Time was, a man lived a loose, careless, carnal life; by the ministry of some word, or reading of some book, or speaking with some friend, he comes to be convinced of his misery and woful condition, and sees no good nor grace in himself; he hath been even hitherto deceived: at last he comes to get some light, some taste, some sorrows, some heart to use the means, some comfort, and mercy, and hope of life: and when it is thus with him, now he falls; he grows full and falls; and this rising is the cause of his fall; his light is darkness and death to him; and grows to a form of knowledge; his rising makes him fall to formality, and then to profaneness; and so his tasting satisfies him; his sorrows empty his heart of sorrow for sin; and his sorrows for his falls harden his heart in his falls; and all the means of recovering him harden him.—Look as it is in diseases; if the physic and meat turns to be poison, then there is no hope of recovery; a man is sick to death now. The saint's little measure makes him forget what is behind." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 226.

Thus

Thus I have explained what exercise and fruit I mean, when I say, that gracious affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.

The reason why gracious affections have such a tendency and effect, appears from many things that have already been observed, in the preceding parts of this discourse.

The reason of it appears from this, that *gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual*, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something *divine*, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature, in the exercise of those faculties. This is sufficient to shew us why true grace should have such activity, power and efficacy. No wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will shew that he is a God, by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint, as in a sepulchre, or as a dead saviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life, that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint that is the subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act; 2 Cor. ii. 4.——*In demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* 1 Thess. i. 5. *Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.* 1 Cor. iv. 20. *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* Hence saving affections, though oftentimes they do not make so great a noise and show as others; yet have in them a secret solidity, life and strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the heart, leading it into a kind of captivity, 2 Cor. x. 5. gaining a full and stedfast determination of the will for God and holiness, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man's life. A statue may look very much like a real man, and a beautiful man; yea it may have, in its appearance to the eye, the resemblance of a very lively, strong and active man; but yet an inward principle of life and strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to pass, there is no action

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or operation to anſwer the ſhew. Falſe diſcoveries and affections do not go deep enough, to reach and govern the ſpring of mens actions and practice. The ſeed in ſtony ground had not deepneſs of earth, and the root did not go deep enough to bring forth fruit. But gracious affections go to the very bottom of the heart, and take hold of the very inmoſt ſprings of life and activity. Herein chiefly appears the power of true godlineſs, *viz.* in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godlineſs in this reſpect, is what the apoſtle has reſpect to, when he ſpeaks of the power of godlineſs, 2 Tim. iii. 5. as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how ſome profeſſors of religion would notoriouſly fail in the practice of it, and then in the 5th verſe obſerves, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the power of godlineſs, though they have the form of it. Indeed the power of godlineſs is exerted in the firſt place within the ſoul, in the ſenſible, lively exerciſe of gracious affections there. Yet the principal evidence of this power of godlineſs, is in thoſe exerciſes of holy affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the will, and conquering the luſts and corruptions of men, and carrying men on in the way of holineſs, through all temptation, difficulty and oppoſition.

Again, the reaſon why gracious affections have their exerciſe and effect in Chriſtian practice, appears from this, (which has alſo been before obſerved), that *the firſt objective ground of gracious affections, is the tranſcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themſelves, and not any conceived relation they bear to ſelf, or ſelf-intereſt.* This ſhews why holy affections will cauſe men to be holy in their practice univerſally. What makes men partial in religion is, that they ſeek themſelves, and not God, in their religion, and cloſe with religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to ſerve a turn. He that cloſes with religion only to ſerve a turn, will cloſe with no more of it than he imagines ſerves that turn: but he that cloſes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, cloſes with all that has that nature: he that embraces religion for its own ſake, embraces the whole of religion. This alſo ſhews why gracious affections will cauſe men to practiſe religion perſeveringly, and at all times. Religion may alter greatly in proceſs of time, as to its conſiſtence with mens private intereſt, in many reſpects; and therefore he that complies with it only from ſelfiſh views, is liable, in change of times, to forſake it: but the excellent nature of religion, as it

is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all times, and through all changes; it never alters in any respect.

The reason why gracious affections issue in holy practice, also further appears from the kind of excellency of divine things, that it has been observed is the foundation of all holy affections, *viz. their moral excellency, or the beauty of their holiness.* No wonder that a love to holiness, for holiness sake, inclines persons to practise holiness, and to practise every thing that is holy. Seeing holiness is the main thing that excites, draws, and governs all gracious affections, no wonder that all such affections tend to holiness. That which men love, they desire to have and to be united to, and possessed of. That beauty which men delight in, they desire to be adorned with. Those acts which men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of that *divine teaching and leading of the Spirit of God*, which there is in gracious affections, shews the reason of this tendency of such affections to an universally holy practice. For as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine teaching and leading, gives the soul a natural relish of the sweetness of that which is holy, and of every thing that is holy, so far as it comes in view, and excites a distelish and disgust of every thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the nature of that *spiritual knowledge*, which is the foundation of all holy affection, as consisting in *a sense and view of that excellency in divine things, which is supreme and transcendent.* For hereby these things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him; they see him worthy that they should forsake all for him: by the sight of that superlative amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labour with earnestness and activity in his service, and made willing to go through all difficulties for his sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him: for it makes a deep impression upon their minds, that they cannot forget him; and they will follow him whithersoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavour to draw them away from him.

The reason of this practical tendency and issue of gracious affections, further appears, from what has been observed of such affections being *attended with a thorough conviction of the judgement, of the reality and certainty of divine things.* No wonder

wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any reality in the things of religion, will never be at the labour and trouble of such an earnest, universal and persevering practice of religion, through all difficulties, self-denials and sufferings, in a dependence on that, which they are not convinced of. But on the other hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain truth of those things, must needs be governed by them in their practice; for the things revealed in the word of God are so great, and so infinitely more important than all other things, that it is inconsistent with the human nature, that a man should fully believe the truth of them, and not be influenced by them above all things, in his practice.

Again, the reason of this expression and effect of holy affections in the practice, appears from what has been observed of *a change of nature, accompanying such affections*. Without a change of nature, mens practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the tree be made good, the fruit will not be good. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The swine may be washed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a change of nature, he will still wallow in the mire. Nature is a more powerful principle of action, than any thing that opposes it: though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: it is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped a while with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a course, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing more constant and permanent, than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal mens reformation and righteousness. When a natural man denies his lust, and lives a strict, religious life, and seems humble, painful and earnest in religion, it is not natural, it is all a force against nature; as when a stone is violently thrown upwards; but that force will be gradually spent; yet nature will remain in its full strength, and so prevails again, and the stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly nature infused; then may it well be expected, that men will walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of their days.

The reason of this practical exercise and effect of holy affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that *spirit of humility, which attends them*. Humility is that where-

in a ſpirit of obedience does much conſiſt. A proud ſpirit is a rebellious ſpirit, but a humble ſpirit is a yieldable, ſubject, obediential ſpirit. We ſee among men, that the ſervant who is of a haughty ſpirit, is not apt in every thing to be ſubmiſſive and obedient to the will of his maſter; but it is otherwiſe with that ſervant who is of a lowly ſpirit.

And that *lamb-like, dove-like ſpirit*, that has been ſpoken of, which accompanies all gracious affections, fulfils (as the apoſtle obſerves, Rom. xiii. 8. 9. 10. and Gal. v. 14.) all the duties of the ſecond table of the law; wherein Chriſtian practice does very much conſiſt, and wherein the external practice of Chriſtianity chiefly conſiſts.

And the reaſon why gracious affections are attended with that ſtrict, univerſal and conſtant obedience which has been ſpoken of, further appears, from what has been obſerved of that *tenderneſs of ſpirit*, which accompanies the affections of true ſaints, cauſing in them ſo quick and lively a ſenſe of pain, through the preſence of moral evil, and ſuch a dread of the appearance of evil.

And one great reaſon why the Chriſtian practice which flows from gracious affections, is univerſal, and conſtant, and perſevering, appears from what has been obſerved of thoſe affections themſelves, from whence this practice flows, being univerſal and conſtant, in all kinds of holy exerciſes, and towards all objects, and in all circumſtances, and at all ſeaſons, *in a beautiful ſymmetry and proportion.*

And much of the reaſon why holy affections are expreſſed and manifeſted in ſuch an earneſtneſs, activity, and engagedneſs and perſeverance in holy practice, as has been ſpoken of, appears from what has been obſerved, of the ſpiritual appetite and longing after further attainments in religion, which evermore attends true affection, and does not decay, but increaſes as thoſe affections increaſe.

Thus we ſee how the tendency of holy affections to ſuch a Chriſtian practice as has been explained, appears from each of thoſe characteriſtics of holy affection, that have been before ſpoken of.

And this point may be further illuſtrated and confirmed, if it be conſidered, that the holy ſcriptures do abundantly place ſincerity and ſoundneſs in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forſaking all for him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Chriſt, on counting the coſt; in our hearts cloſing and complying with the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with

with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and for ever, unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any reserve; or, in one word, in the great duty of *self-denial* for Christ; or in denying, *i. e.* as it were disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the texts to this purpose referred to in the margin *. Now surely having an heart to forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. An having an heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to a denying ourselves in deed, when Christ and self-interest stand in competition. A giving up ourselves, with all that we have, in our hearts, without making any reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our hearts entirely closing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the cost, tends to an universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties that we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance.

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connection most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an unactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature; for it is life itself, and the most active kind of life, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has as direct a relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the sun has to beams sent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action: for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that it is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct rela-

* Matth. v. 29. 30. Chap. vi. 24. Chap. viii. 19.—22. Chap. iv. 18. to 22. Chap. x. 37. 38. 39. Chap. xiii. 44 45. 46. Chap. xvi. 24. 25. 26. Chap. xviii. 8. 9. Chap. xix. 21. 27. 28. 29. Luke v. 27. 28. Chap. x. 42. Chap. xii. 33 34. Chap. xiv. 16.—20. 25.—33. Chap. xvi. 13. Acts iv. 34. 35. with Chap. v. 1.—11. Rom. vi. 3.—8. Gal. ii. 20. Chap. vi. 14. Philip. iii. 7.—10. Jam. i. 8. 9. 10. Chap iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. Rev. xiv. 4. Gen. xii. 1.—4. with Heb. xi. 8. 9. 10. Gen. xxii. 12. and Heb. xi. 17. Chap. xi. 24.—27. Deut. xiii. 6. and Chap. xxxiii. 9. Ruth i. 6.—16. with Psal. xlv. 10. 11. and 2 Sam. xv. 19.—22. Psal. lxxiii. 25. Psal. xvi. 5, 6. Lam. iii. 24. Jer. x. 16.

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tion to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought: all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end; Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Yea it is the very end of the redemption of Christ; Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.* Heb. ix. 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Col. i. 21. 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight.* 1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation.*—Luke i. 74. 75. *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.* God often speaks of holy practice, as the end of that great typical redemption, the redemption from Egyptian bondage; as Exod. iv. 23. *Let my son go, that he may serve me.* So chap. iv. 23. and vii. 16. and viii. 1. 20. and ix. 1. 13. and x. 3. And this is also declared to be the end of election; John xv. 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.* Eph. i. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.* Chap. ii. 10. *Created unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them.* Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard: as the matter is often represented in scripture; Matth. iii. 10. chap. xiii. 8. 23.—30. 38. chap. xxi. 19. 33. 34. Luke xiii. 6. John xv. 1. 2. 4. 5. 6. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7. 8. Is. v. 1.—8. Cant. viii. 11. 12. Is. xxvii. 2. 3. †. And

† "To profess to know much is easy; but to bring your affections into subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to cross your wills and yourselves, upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord looketh, that in our lives we

And therefore every thing in a true Chriſtian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice, is what every grace, and every diſcovery, and every individual thing, which belongs to Chriſtian experience, has a direct tendency to *.

The conſtant and indiſſoluble connection that there is between a Chriſtian principle and profeſſion in the true ſaints, and the fruit of holy practice in their lives, was typified of old in the frame of the golden candleſtick in the temple. It is beyond doubt that that golden candleſtick, with its ſeven branches and ſeven lamps, was a type of the church of Chriſt. The Holy Ghoſt himſelf, has been pleaſed to put that matter out of doubt, by repreſenting his church by ſuch a golden candleſtick, with ſeven lamps, in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and repreſenting the ſeven churches of Aſia by ſeven golden candleſticks, in the firſt chapter of the Revelation. That golden candleſtick in the temple was every where, throughout its whole frame, made with *knops and flowers*, Exod. xxv. 31. to the end, and chap. xxxvii. 17.—24. The word tranſlated *knop*, in the ori-

we ſhould be ſerviceable to him, and uſeful to men. That which is within, the Lord and our brethren are never the better for it: but the outward obedience, flowing thence, glorifieth God, and does good to men. The Lord will have this done. What elſe is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees may be filled with ſap? And what is the end of that ſap, but that the trees may bring forth fruit? What careth the huſbandman for leaves, and barren trees?" *Dr Preſton of the Church's Carriage.*

* "What is the end of every grace, but to mollify the heart, and make it pliable to ſome command or other? Look, how many commandments, ſo many graces there are in virtue and efficacy, although not ſo many ſeveral names are given them. The end of every ſuch grace is to make us obedient: as the end of temperance is chaſtity, to bow the heart to theſe commands, *Be ye ſober*, &c. *not in chambering and wantonneſs*, &c. When the Lord commandeth us not to be angry with our brother, the end of meekneſs, and why the Lord infuſeth it, is to keep us from unadviſed raſh anger. So faith, the end of it is to take Jeſus Chriſt, to make us obedient to the command of the goſpel, which commands us to believe in him. So as all graces do join together, but to frame and faſhion the ſoul to obedience; then ſo much obedience as is in your lives, ſo much grace in your hearts, and no more. Therefore aſk your hearts, how ſubject you are to the Lord in your lives? It was the counſel that Francis Spira gave to them about him, ſaith he, Learn all of me to take heed of ſevering faith and obedience; I taught juſtification by faith, but neglected obedience; and therefore is this befallen me. I have known ſome godly men, whoſe comfort on their death-beds hath been not from the inward acts of their minds, which apart conſidered, might be ſubject to miſapprehenſions, but from the courſe of obedience in their lives, iſſuing thence. Let Chriſtians look to it, that in all their converſation, as they ſtand in every relation, as ſcholars, tradeſmen, huſbands, wives, look to this, that when they come to die, they have been ſubject in all things. This will yield comfort." *Dr Preſton's Church's Carriage.*

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ginal signifies apple or pomegranate. There was a *knop and a flower, a knop and a flower:* where-ever there was a flower, there was an apple or pomegranate with it: the flower and the fruit were constantly connected, without fail. The flower contained the principles of the fruit, and a beautiful promising appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful appearance; the principle or shew of fruit, had evermore real fruit attending it, or succeeding it. So it is in the church of Christ: there is the principle of fruit in grace in the heart; and there is an amiable profession, signified by the open flowers of the candlestick; and there is answerable fruit, in holy practice, constantly attending this principle and profession. Every branch of the golden candlestick, thus composed of golden apples and flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining lamp on the top of it. For it is by this means that the saints shine as lights in the world, by making a fair and good profession of religion, and having their profession evermore joined with answerable fruit in practice: agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matth. v. 15. 16. *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may* SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, *and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* A fair and beautiful profession, and golden fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable ornaments of the true church of Christ. Therefore we find that apples and flowers were not only the ornaments of the candlestick in the temple, but of the temple itself, which is a type of the church; which the apostle tells us, *is the temple of the living God.* See 1 Kings vi. 18. *And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops, and open flowers.* The ornaments and crown of the pillars, at the entrance of the temple, were of the same sort: they were lilies and pomegranates, or flowers and fruits mixed together, 1 Kings vii. 18. 19. So it is with all those that are *as pillars in the temple of God, who shall go no more out,* or never be ejected as intruders; as it is with all true saints; Rev. iii. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.*

Much the same thing seems to be signified by the ornaments on the skirt of the ephod, the garment of Aaron the high priest; which were golden bells and pomegranates. That these skirts of Aaron's garment represent the church, or the saints, (that are as it were the garment of Christ), is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psal. cxxxiii. 1. 2. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren, to dwell together in unity!*

*It*

*It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.* That ephod of Aaron signified the same with the seamless coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's coat had no seam, but was woven from the top throughout, so it was with the ephod, Exod. xxxix. 22. As God took care in his providence, that Christ's coat should not be rent; so God took special care that the ephod should not be rent; Exod. xxviii. 32. and chap. xxxix. 23. The golden bells on this ephod, by their precious matter and pleasant sound, do well represent the good profession that the saints make; and the pomegranates, the fruit they bring forth. And as in the hem of the ephod, bells and pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was *a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate*, Exod. xxviii. 34. and chap. xxxix. 26.: so it is in the true saints; their good profession and their good fruit, do constantly accompany one another: the fruit they bring forth in life, evermore answers the pleasant sound of their profession.

Again, the very same thing is represented by Christ, in his description of his spouse, Cant. vii. 2. *Thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.* Here again are beautiful flowers, and good fruit, accompanying one another. The lilies were fair and beautiful flowers, and the wheat was good fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore found in true saints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so it is found in them only; none but true Christians do live such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unsanctified men are *workers of iniquity*: they are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do. There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, and both begin and finish the tour: they will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the professors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways: they will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him whithersoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, and though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to sin; the chains of their old task-masters are not broken: their lusts yet have a reigning power in their hearts; and therefore to these masters they will bow down

again *. Dan. xii. 10. *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked will do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand.* Is. xxvi. 10. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly.* Is. xxxv. 8. *And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.* Hos. xiv. 9. *The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.* Job xxvii. 8. 9. 10. *What is the hope of the hypocrite?—Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* An unsanctified man may hide his sin,

* "No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous: Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill; and every wicked man his lust." *Shepard's Sincere convert*, 1st edition, p. 96.

"There is never an unsound heart in the world, but as they say of witches, they have some familiar that sucks them, so they have some lust that is beloved of them, some beloved there is they have given a promise to never to forsake." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 15.

"No man that is married to the law, but his fig-leaves cover some nakedness. All his duties ever brood some lust. There is some one sin or other the man lives in; which either the Lord discovers, and he will not part with, as the young man; or else is so spiritual, he cannot see all his life-time. Read through the strictest of all, and see this, Matth. xxiii. *Painted sepulchres.* Paul that was blameless, yet (Eph. ii. 3. Tit. iii. 3.) *served divers lusts and pleasures.* And the reason is, the law is not the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. 9 which breaks off from every sin. There is no law that can give life, Gal. iii. 21. and hence many men have strong resolutions, and break all again. Hence men sin and sorrow, and pray again, and then go with more ease in their sin. Examine thyself; is there any living lust with thy righteousness? It is sure, it is a righteousness thou art married to, and never wert yet matched to Christ." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 19. 20.

"No hypocrite, though he closeth with Christ, and for a time grow up in knowledge of, and communion with Christ, but he hath at that time hidden lusts and thorns that overgrow his growings, and choke all at last, and in conclusion mediates a league between Christ and his lusts, and seeks to reconcile them together." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 109.

"——Their faith is in such a party, as never was yet thoroughly rent from sin. And here is the great wound of the most cunning hypocrites living.—Let a man be cast down as low as hell with sorrow, and lie under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come; let a man then be raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; let a man reform and shine like an earthly angel; yet if not rent from lust, that either you did never see it, or if so, you have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, worldly, sluggish still, false in your dealings, cunning in your tradings, devils in your families, images in your churches; you are objects of pity now, and shall be of terror at the great day. For where sin remains in power, it will bring faith, and Christ, and joy into bondage and service of itself." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 125.

"Methinks it is with the best hypocrites, as it is with divers old merchants: they prize and desire the gain of

ſin, and may in many things and for a ſeaſon refrain from ſin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his ſin, and give it a bill of divorce: ſin is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: *Wickedneſs is ſweet in his mouth;* and therefore *he hides it under his tongue; he ſpares it, and forſakes it not; but keeps it ſtill within his mouth,* Job xx. 12. 13. Herein chiefly conſiſts the ſtraitneſs of the gate, and the narrowneſs of the way that leads to life; upon the account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, *viz.* that it is a way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all ungodlineſs, and ſo a way of *ſelf-denial* or *ſelf-renunciation.*

Many natural men, under the means that are uſed with them, and God's ſtrivings with them to bring them to forſake their ſins, do by their ſins, as Pharoah did by his pride and covetouſneſs, which he gratified by keeping the children of Iſrael in bondage, when God ſtrove with him to bring him to let the people go. When God's hand preſſed Pharaoh ſore, and he was exerciſed with fears of God's future wrath, he entertained ſome thoughts of letting the people go, and promiſed he would do

of merchandiſe; but to be at the trouble to prepare the ſhip, to put themſelves upon the hazards and dangers of the ſhip, to go and fetch the treaſure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and deſire earneſtly the treaſures of heaven; but to be at the trouble of a heaven voyage to fetch this treaſure, to paſs through the valley of Baca, tears, temptations, the powers of darkneſs, the breaches, oppoſition, and contradictions of a ſinful unbelieving heart, good and evil report, to paſs from one depth and wave to another, this the beſt hypocrite fails in; and hence loſes all at laſt. And this I conceive to be one of the great differences between the ſtrong deſires and eſteems of hypocrites and ſaints.—Look, as it is with men that have two trades, or two ſhops; one is as much as ever they can follow or tend; they are forced at laſt to put off one, and they muſt neglect one; ſo here.——That ſpirit of ſloth and ſlumber, which the Lord ever leaves the beſt hypocrite to, ſo mightily oppreſſeth all their ſenſes, that they cannot uſe effectually all means to accompliſh their ends. And hence a man deſires the end, but has it not; Prov. xiii. 4." *Shepard's Parable,* Part I. p. 150. 151.

"Read through all the ſcripture; conſtantly, never any hypocrites but they had this brand, Matth. vii. 23. *You workers of iniquity.*" *Shepard's Parable,* Part I. p. 195.

"A carnal man may hit upon ſome good duty that God commands, and refrain ſome ſin that God forbids; but to go through, he cannot: to take up reproach and diſgrace, to loſe his credit, to forſake his friends, to loſe honour, and riches, and pleaſures; this he will not do, until he be humbled." *Dr Preſton on Paul's converſion.*

"So it is with men, becauſe they want humiliation. Therefore their *profeſſion* and *they* do not continue, but part willingly one from another. They will do ſome things, but not all things: and they will forego ſome things, but not all things. And therefore our Saviour ſaith, Luke xiv. *He that will not forſake all for my ſake, is not worthy of me.* He is not worth the ſaving, that prizes not me above all things whatſoever. And a man will not prize Chriſt, nor forſake all things for Chriſt, until he be humbled." *Ibid.*

it; but from time to time he broke his promiſes, when he ſaw there was reſpite. When God filled Egypt with thunder and lightening, and the fire ran along the ground, then Pharaoh is brought to confeſs his ſin with ſeeming humility, and to have a great reſolution to let the people go, Exod. ix. 27. 28. *And Pharaoh ſent, and called for Moſes and Aaron, and ſaid unto them, I have ſinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye ſhall ſtay no longer.* So ſinners are ſometimes by thunders and lightenings, and great terrors of the law, brought to a ſeeming work of humiliation, and to appearance to part with their ſins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a diſpoſition to diſmiſs them, than Pharaoh was to let the people go. Pharaoh in the ſtruggle that was between his conſcience and his luſts, was for contriving that God might be ſerved, and he enjoy his luſts that were gratified by the ſlavery of the people, too. Moſes inſiſted that Iſrael's God ſhould be ſerved and ſacrificed to: Pharaoh was willing to conſent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people; *Go ſacrifice to your God in the land*, ſays he, Exod. viii. 25. So, many ſinners are for contriving to ſerve God, and enjoy their luſts too. Moſes objected againſt complying with Pharaoh's propoſal, that ſerving God, and yet continuing in Egypt under their taſk-maſters, did not agree together, and were inconſiſtent one with another; (there is no ſerving God, and continuing ſlaves to ſuch enemies of God at the ſame time). After this Pharaoh conſented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away: he was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with reſpect to their ſins. Afterwards Pharaoh conſented to let the *men* go, if they would leave the *women* and *children*, Exod. x. 8 9. 10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he conſented that they ſhould go, even *women* and *children*, as well as *men*, provided they would leave their *cattle* behind: but he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had, Exod. x. 24. So it oftentimes is with ſinners; they are willing to part with ſome of their ſins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more groſs acts of ſin, but not to part with their luſts, in leſſer indulgencies of them. Whereas we muſt part with all our ſins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, *men, women, children*, and *cattle*: they muſt all be let go, with *their young, and with their old, with their ſons, and with their daughters*,

*ters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there muſt not be an hoof left behind;* as Moſes told Pharoah, with reſpect to the children of Iſrael. At laſt, when it came to extremity, Pharaoh conſented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not ſtedfaſtly of that mind; he ſoon repented, and purſued after them again: and the reaſon was, that thoſe luſts of pride and covetouſneſs, that were gratified by Pharaoh's dominion over the people, and the gains of their ſervice, were never really mortified in him, but only violently reſtrained. And thus, he being guilty of backſliding, after his ſeeming compliance with God's commands, was deſtroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of diſobedience to the commands of God, that may ſeem to be univerſal, as to what appears, for a little ſeaſon: but becauſe it is a mere force, without the mortification of the inward principle of ſin, they will not perſevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and ſo bring on themſelves dreadful and remedileſs deſtruction. There were many falſe diſciples in Chriſt's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; but ſome on one occaſion, and ſome on another, went back and walked no more with him *.

From

* "The counterfeit and common grace of fooliſh virgins, after ſome time of glorious profeſſion, will certainly go out and be quite ſpent. It conſumes in the uſing, and ſhining, and burning.—Men that have been moſt forward, decay; their gifts decay, life decays.—It is ſo, after ſome time of profeſſion: for at firſt, it rather grows than decays and withers: but afterward they have enough of it, it withers and dies.—The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful meaſure of awakening grace; it comes upon them, as it did upon Balaam, and as it is in overflowing waters, which ſpread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places.—Though it doth come upon them ſo, yet it doth never reſt within, ſo as to dwell there, to take up an eternal manſion for himſelf.—Hence it doth decay by little and little; until at laſt it is quite gone. As ponds filled with rain-water, which comes upon them; not ſpring-water, that riſeth up within them; it dries up by little and little, until quite dry." *Shepard's Parable*, Part II. p. 58. 59.

"Some men may apprehend Chriſt, neither out of fear of miſery, nor only to preſerve ſome ſin; but God lets in light and heat of the bleſſed beams of the glorious goſpel of the Son of God: and therefore there is mercy, rich, free, ſweet, for damned, great, vile ſinners: Good Lord, ſaith the ſoul, what a ſweet miniſtry, word, God, and goſpel is this! and there reſts. This was the frame of the ſtony-ground; which heard the word, and received it with joy, and for a time believed. And this is the caſe of thouſands, that are much affected with the promiſe and mercy of Chriſt, and hang upon free grace for a time: but as it is with ſweet ſmells in a room, they continue not long; or as flowers, they grow old and withered, and then fall. In time of temptation, luſt, and world, and ſloth is more ſweet than Chriſt, and all his goſpel is." *Shepard's Parable*, Part II. p. 168.

"Never any carnal heart, but ſome root

From what has been said, it is manifest, that Christian practice, or a holy life, is *a great and distinguishing sign* of true and saving grace. But I may go further, and assert, that it is *the chief* of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the *greatest sign* of grace. Therefore, to set this matter in a clear light, I will endeavour particularly and distinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the *principal sign* by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others sincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

1. I shall consider Christian practice and an holy life, as a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, *to the eye of his neighbours* and brethren.

And that this is the *chief sign* of grace in this respect, is very evident from the word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their fruits: Matth. vii. 16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* And then after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why it must needs be, that mens fruits must be the chief evidence of what sort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the assertion; ver. 20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Again chap. xii. 33. *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt.*—— As much as to say, it is a very absurd thing, for any to suppose that the tree is good, and yet the fruit bad, that the tree is of one sort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit. Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, *For the tree is known by its fruit*, than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is distinguished from another. So Luke vi. 44. *Every tree is*

root of bitterness did grow up at last in this soil. *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 195.

"We shall see in experience: take the best professors living; though they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and follow the Lord; yet they will in time depart.—The Spirit never was given effectually to draw them; nor yet to keep them." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 205.

*known*

*known by his own fruit.* Christ no where says, Ye shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers, or ye shall know men by their talk, or ye shall know them by the good story they tell of their experiences, or ye shall know them by the manner and air of their speaking, and emphasis and pathos of expression, or by their speaking feelingly, or by making a very great show by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections ye feel in your hearts towards them: but by *their fruits shall ye know them; the tree is known by its fruit; every tree is known by its own fruit.* And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us; Matth. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul: Christ directs that this light should not only shine within, but that it should *shine* out *before men*, that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ doth not say, that others hearing your good words, your good story, or your pathetical expressions; but *that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Doubtless when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, his rule is the best that is to be found. And the apostles do mention a Christian practice, as the principal ground of their esteem of persons as true Christians. As the apostle Paul, in the 6th chapter of Hebrews. There the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of them that have great common illuminations, that have *been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, that *afterwards fall away*, and are like barren ground, *that is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned:* and then immediately adds in the 9th verse, (expressing his charity for the Christian Hebrews, as having that saving grace, which is better than all these common illuminations), *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation; though we thus speak.* And then in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them: he does not say, that it was because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work, and labour of love; *for God*

*God is not unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.* And the same apostle speaks of a faithful serving God in practice, as the proper proof to others of mens loving Christ above all, and preferring his honour to their private interest, Phil. ii. 21. 22. *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's: but ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.* So the apostle John expresses the same, as the ground of his good opinion of Gaius, 3 John 3.—6. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee.* But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in Gauis? and how did the apostle judge of the truth that was in him? it was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he said, and had the very language of a Christian: but they testified, *that he walked in the truth;* as it follows, *even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church.* Thus the apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they *came and testified of his walking in the truth.* And the apostle seems in this same place, to give it as a rule to Gaius how he should judge of others: in verse 10. he mentions one Diotrephes, that did not carry himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th verse, he directs Gaius to beware of such, and not to follow them; and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, exactly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, *by their fruits ye shall know them;* says the apostle, *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not seen God.* And I would further observe, that the apostle James, expressly comparing that way of shewing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of shewing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former; Jam. ii. 18. *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* A manifestation of our faith *without works*, or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in *words*, whereby a man professes faith. As the apostle says, ver. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man* SAY *he hath faith?*—Therefore here are two ways

ways of manifesting to our neighbour what is in our hearts; one by what we *say*, and the other by what we *do*. But the apostle abundantly prefers the latter as the best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourselves in words, our saying that we have faith, and that we are converted, and telling the manner how we came to have faith, and the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompanied it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we *say*: it is but shewing our faith by our *words*; which the apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and shewing our faith by our *works*.

And as the scripture plainly teaches, that practice is the best evidence of the sincerity of professing Christians; so reason teaches the same thing. Reason shews, that mens deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. The common sense of all mankind, through all ages and nations, teaches them to judge of mens hearts chiefly by their practice, in other matters: as, whether a man be a loyal subject, a true lover, a dutiful child, or a faithful servant. If a man professes a great deal of love and friendship to another, reason teaches all men, that such a profession is not so great an evidence of his being a real and hearty friend, as his appearing a friend in deeds; being faithful and constant to his friend, in prosperity and adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himself, and suffer in his personal interest, to do him a kindness. A wise man will trust to such evidences of the sincerity of friendship, further than a thousand earnest professions and solemn declarations, and most affectionate expressions of friendship in words. And there is equal reason, why practice should also be looked upon as the best evidence of friendship towards Christ. Reason says the same that Christ said, in John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* Thus if we see a man, who in the course of his life, seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for the honour of Christ, and to promote his kingdom and interest in the world; reason teaches, that this is an evidence of love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a man only says he has love to Christ, and tells of the inward experiences he has had of love to him, what strong love he felt, and how his heart was drawn out in love at such and such a time, when it may be there appears but little imitation of Christ in his behaviour, and he seems backward to do any great matter for him, or to put himself out of his way for the promoting of his kingdom, but seems to be apt to excuse himself, when-

ever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a man in declaring his experiences, tells how he found his heart weaned from the world, and saw the vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at such and such times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls heaven and earth to witness to it; but yet in his practice is violent in pursuing the world, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loth to part with much of it to charitable and pious uses, it comes from him almost like his heart's blood. But there is another professing Christian, that says not a great deal, yet in his behaviour appears ready at all times to forsake the world, whenever it stands in the way of his duty, and is free to part with it at any time, to promote religion and the good of his fellow-creatures. Reason teaches, that the latter gives far the most credible manifestation of an heart weaned from the world. And if a man appears to walk humbly before God and men, and to be of a conversation that savours of a broken heart, appearing patient and resigned to God under affliction, and meek in his behaviour amongst men; this is a better evidence of humiliation, than if a person only tells how great a sense he had of his own unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the dust, and was quite emptied of himself, and see himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, &c. &c. but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of saints, and by just right the head of all the Christians in the town, and is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least contradiction or opposition; we may be assured in such a case, that a man's practice comes from a lower place in his heart, than his profession. So (to mention no more instances) if a professor of Christianity manifests in his behaviour a pitiful tender spirit towards others in calamity, ready to bear their burdens with them, willing to spend his substance for them, and to suffer many inconveniences in his worldly interest to promote the good of others souls and bodies; is not this a more credible manifestation of a spirit of love to men, than only a man's telling what love he felt to others at certain times, how he pitied their souls, how his soul was in travail for them, and how he felt a hearty love and pity to his enemies; when in his behaviour he seems to be of a very selfish spirit, close and niggardly, all for himself, and none for his neighbours, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently, when really their hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate pangs, have

have thought themſelves willing to be damned eternally for the glory of God. Paſſing affections eaſily produce words; and words are cheap; and godlineſs is more eaſily feigned in words than in actions. Chriſtian practice is a coſtly laborious thing. The ſelf-denial that is required of Chriſtians, and the narrowneſs of the way that leads to life, does not conſiſt in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more eaſily be brought to talk like ſaints, than to act like ſaints.

Thus it is plain, that Chriſtian practice is the beſt ſign or manifeſtation of the true godlineſs of a profeſſing Chriſtian, to the eye of his neighbours.

But then the following things ſhould be well obſerved, that this matter may be rightly underſtood.

*Firſt*, It muſt be obſerved, that when the ſcripture ſpeaks of Chriſtian practice, as the beſt evidence to others, of ſincerity and truth of grace, *a profeſſion of Chriſtianity* is not excluded, but ſuppoſed. The rules mentioned, were rules given to the followers of Chriſt, to guide them in their thoughts of *profeſſing Chriſtians*, and thoſe that offered themſelves as ſome of their ſociety, whereby they might judge of the truth of their *pretences*, and the ſincerity of the *profeſſion* they made; and not for the trial of Heathens, or thoſe that made no pretence to Chriſtianity, and that Chriſtians had nothing to do with. This is as plain as is poſſible in that great rule which Chriſt gives in the 7th of Matthew, *By their fruits ye ſhall know them.* He there gives a rule how to judge of thoſe that profeſſed to be Chriſtians, yea that made a very high profeſſion, *falſe prophets, who come in ſheeps cloathing*, as ver. 15. So it is alſo with that of the apoſtle James, chap. ii. 18. *Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works.* It is evident, that both theſe ſorts of perſons, offering to give theſe diverſe evidences of their faith, are profeſſors of faith: this is implied in their offering each of them to give evidences of the faith they profeſſed. And it is evident by the preceding verſes, that the apoſtle is ſpeaking of profeſſors of faith in Jeſus Chriſt. So it is very plain, that the apoſtle John, in thoſe paſſages that have been obſerved in his third epiſtle, is ſpeaking of profeſſing Chriſtians. Though in theſe rules, the Chriſtian practice of profeſſors be ſpoken of as the greateſt and moſt diſtinguiſhing ſign of their ſincerity in their profeſſion, much more evidential than their profeſſion itſelf; yet a profeſſion of Chriſtianity is plainly preſuppoſed: it is not the main thing in the evidence, nor any thing diſtinguiſhing in it; yet it is a thing

requisite and necessary in it. As the having an animal body, is not any thing distinguishing of a man, from other creatures, and is not the main thing in the evidence of human nature; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in the evidence. So that if any man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a person sent of God; these rules of Christ and his apostles do not at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible practice and virtues be what they will. And not only do these rules take no place with respect to a man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open infidel; but also with respect to a man that only forbears to make a profession of Christianity: because these rules were given us only to judge of professing Christians: fruits must be joined with open flowers; bells and pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this inquiry, *viz.* When a man may be said to profess Christianity, or what profession may properly be called a profession of Christianity?

I answer in two things.

1. In order to a man's being properly said to make a profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that he has it. And therefore so much as belongs to a thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated *that* thing; so much is essential to the declaration of *that* thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration of *that* thing. If we take only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part that is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the essence of it is wanting. So if we profess only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that Jesus is the Messiah; for this reason, because such a belief is essential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that Jesus satisfied for our sins, and other essential doctrines of the gospel, because a belief of these things also are essential to Christianity. But there are other things as essential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly

truly said to profess Christianity. Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our own sinfulness, and that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all sin, and that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour, and that we love him above all, and are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and for ever his, *&c.* Such things as these do as much belong to the essence of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: and therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession. Not that in order to a being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue: but certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the essence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should *express* in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's word, or by scripture-examples of public professions of religion, God's people have made from time to time. Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: as of old, when persons were initiated as professors, they came confessing their sins, manifesting their humiliation for sin, Matth. iii. 6. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called *the baptism of repentance*, Mark i. 3. And John, when he had baptized them, exhorted them to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. *i. e.* agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, Matth. iii. 7. 8. 9. 10. 12. So the apostle Peter says to the Jews, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized:* which shews, that repentance is a qualification that must be visible in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly professed. So when the Jews that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public profession of repentance of their sins, Neh. ix. 2. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction, that God would be just in our damnation: see Neh. ix. 33. together with ver. 35. and the beginning of the next chapter. They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ. Thus Philip, in order to baptizing the eunuch, required that he should profess that he *believed with all his heart:* and they that were received as visible Christians, at that great outpouring

outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of Pentecoſt, appeared *gladly to receive the goſpel;* Acts ii. 41. *Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized: and the ſame day there were added unto them about three thouſand ſouls.* They ſhould profeſs that they rely only on Chriſt's righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only righteouſneſs and portion. It is foretold, that all nations ſhould be brought publicly to make this profeſſion, Iſ. xlv. 22. to the end; *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe. I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear. Surely, ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: even to him ſhall men come, and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed. In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory.* They ſhould profeſs to give up themſelves entirely to Chriſt, and to God through him; as the children of Iſrael, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God; Deut. xxvi. 17. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his ſtatutes, and his commandments, and his judgements, and to hearken unto his voice.* They ought to profeſs a willingneſs of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God univerſally and perſeveringly; Exod. xix. 8. and xxiv. 3. 7. Deut. xxvi. 16. 17. 18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Neh. x. 28. 29. Pſal. cxix. 57. 106. They ought to profeſs, that all their hearts and ſouls are in theſe engagements to be the Lord's, and for ever to ſerve him; 2 Chron. xv. 12. 13. 14. God's people's ſwearing to God, and ſwearing *by* his name, or *to* his name, as it might be rendered, (by which ſeems to be ſignified their ſolemnly giving up themſelves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and ſerve him), is ſpoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's viſible Iſrael; Deut. vi. 13. and x. 20. Pſal. lxiii. 11. Iſ. xix. 18. chap. xlv. 23. 24. compared with Rom. xiv. 11. and Phil. ii. 10. 11. Iſ. xlviii. 1. 2. and lxv. 15. 16. Jer. iv. 2. and v. 7. and xii. 16. Hoſ. iv. 15. and x. 4. Therefore, in order to perſons being intitled to full eſteem and charity, with their neighbours, as being ſincere profeſſors of Chriſtianity; by thoſe forementioned rules of Chriſt and his apoſtles, there muſt be a viſibly holy life, with a profeſſion, either expreſſing, or plainly implying ſuch things as thoſe which have been now mentioned. We

are

are to *know them by their fruits*; that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profeſs to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have ſomething in them, which they do not ſo much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That profeſſion of theſe things, which is properly called a Chriſtian profeſſion, and which muſt be joined with Chriſtian practice, in order to perſons being intitled to the benefit of thoſe rules, muſt be made (as to what appears) underſtandingly: that is, they muſt be perſons that appear to have been ſo far inſtructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to underſtand the proper import of what is expreſſed in their profeſſion. For ſounds are no ſignifications or declarations of any thing, any further than men underſtand the meaning of their own ſounds.

But in order to perſons making a proper profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſuch as the ſcripture directs to, and ſuch as the followers of Chriſt ſhould require, in order to the acceptance of the profeſſors with full charity, as of their ſociety; it is not neceſſary they ſhould give an account of the particular ſteps and method, by which the Holy Spirit, ſenſibly to them, wrought and brought about thoſe great eſſential things of Chriſtianity in their hearts. There is no footſtep in the ſcripture of any ſuch way of the apoſtles, or primitive miniſters and Chriſtians, requiring any ſuch relation, in order to their receiving and treating others, as their Chriſtian brethren, to all intents and purpoſes, or of their firſt examining them, concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profeſſion of the things wrought; but no account of the manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the leaſt ſhadow in the ſcripture of any ſuch cuſtom in the church of God, from Adam to the death of the apoſtle John.

I am far from ſaying, that it is not requiſite that perſons ſhould give any ſort of account of their experiences to their brethren. For perſons to profeſs thoſe things wherein the eſſence of Chriſtianity lies, is the ſame thing as to profeſs that they *experience* thoſe things. Thus for perſons ſolemnly to profeſs, that, in a ſenſe and full conviction of their own utter ſinfulneſs, miſery, and impotence, and totally undone ſtate as in themſelves, and their juſt deſert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath, without mercy, and the utter inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs, or any thing in them, to ſatisfy divine juſtice, or recommend them to God's favour, they do only and entirely

entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Christ; and that in a full conviction and sense of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; and in a dependence on his promises of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ; I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing, as to profess that they are conscious to, or do *experience* such things in their hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that persons giving an account of their experience of particular exercises of grace, with the times and circumstances, gives no advantage to others in forming a judgement of their state; or that persons may not fitly be inquired of concerning these in some cases, especially cases of great importance, where all possible satisfaction concerning persons piety is especially to be desired and sought after, as in the case of ordination or approbation of a minister. It may give advantage in forming a judgement, in several respects; and among others, in this, that hereby we may be better satisfied, that the professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he does not make the profession in mere formality. In order to a profession of Christianity being accepted to any purpose, there ought to be good reason, from the circumstances of the profession, to think, that the professor does not make such a profession out of a mere customary compliance with a prescribed form, using words without any distinct meaning,

meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous manner, as confeſſions of faith are often ſubſcribed; but that the profeſſor underſtandingly and honeſtly ſignifies what he is conſcious of in his own heart; otherwiſe his profeſſion can be of no ſignificance, and no more to be regarded than the ſound of things without life. But indeed (whatever advantage an account of particular exerciſes may give in judging of this) it muſt be owned, that the profeſſor having been previouſly thoroughly inſtructed by his teachers, and giving good proof of his ſufficient knowledge, together with a practice agreeable to his profeſſion, is the beſt evidence of this.

Nor do I ſuppoſe, but that, if a perſon that is inquired of about particular paſſages, times and circumſtances of his Chriſtian experience, among other things, ſeems to be able to give a diſtinct account of the manner of his firſt converſion, in ſuch a method as has been frequently obſervable in true converſion, ſo that things ſeem ſenſibly and diſtinctly to follow one another, in the order of time, according to the order of nature; it is an illuſtrating circumſtance, that among other things, adds luſtre to the evidence he gives his brethren of the truth of his experiences.

But the thing that I ſpeak of as unſcriptural, is the inſiſting on a particular account of the diſtinct method and ſteps, wherein the Spirit of God did ſenſibly proceed, in firſt bringing the ſoul into a ſtate of ſalvation, as a thing requiſite in order to receiving a profeſſor into full charity as a real Chriſtian; or ſo, as for the want of ſuch relation, to diſregard other things in the evidence perſons give to their neighbours of their Chriſtianity, that are vaſtly more important and eſſential.

*Secondly*, That we may rightly underſtand how Chriſtian practice is the greateſt evidence that others can have of the ſincerity of a profeſſing Chriſtian, it is needful that what was ſaid before, ſhewing what Chriſtian practice is, ſhould be borne in mind; and that it ſhould be conſidered how far this may be viſible to others. Merely that a profeſſor of Chriſtianity is what is commonly called an honeſt man, and a moral man, (*i. e.* we have no ſpecial tranſgreſſion or iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a blot on his character), is no great evidence of the ſincerity of his profeſſion. This is not *making his light ſhine before men*. This is not that *work and labour of love ſhewed towards Chriſt's name*, which gave the apoſtle ſuch perſuaſion of the ſincerity of the profeſſing Hebrews, Heb. vi. 9. 10. It may be ſo, that we may ſee nothing in a man, *but*

*that he may be* a good man, there may appear nothing in his life and converſation inconſiſtent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great poſitive evidence *that he is* ſo. But there may be great poſitive appearances of holineſs in mens viſible behaviour: their life may appear to be a life of the ſervice of God: they may appear to follow the example of Jeſus Chriſt, and come up in a great meaſure to thoſe excellent rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters of Matthew, and 12th of Romans, and many other parts of the New Teſtament: there may be a great appearance of their being univerſal in their obedience to Chriſt's commands and the rules of the goſpel. They may appear to be univerſal in the performance of the duties of the firſt table, manifeſting the fear and love of God: and alſo univerſal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to ſaints, and love to enemies; rules of meekneſs and forgiveneſs, rules of mercy and charity, and looking not only at our own things, but alſo at the things of others; rules of doing good to mens ſouls and bodies, to particular perſons and to the public; rules of temperance and mortification, and of an humble converſation; rules of bridling the tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bleſs men, ſhewing that in their tongues is the law of kindneſs. They may appear to walk as Chriſtians, in all places, and at all ſeaſons, in the houſe of God, and in their families, and among their neighbours, on Sabbath-days, and every day, in buſineſs and in converſation, towards friends and enemies, towards ſuperiors, inferiors, and equals. Perſons in their viſible walk may appear to be very earneſtly engaged in the ſervice of God and mankind, much to labour and lay out themſelves in this work of a Chriſtian, and to be very conſtant and ſtedfaſt in it, under all circumſtances and temptations. There may be great manifeſtations of a ſpirit to deny themſelves, and ſuffer for God and Chriſt, and the intereſt of religion, and the benefit of their brethren. There may be great appearances in a man's walk, of a diſpoſition to forſake any thing, rather than to forſake Chriſt, and to make every thing give place to his honour. There may be great manifeſtations in a man's behaviour of ſuch religion as this being his element, and of his placing the delight and happineſs of his life in it; and his converſation may be ſuch, that he may carry with him a ſweet odour of Chriſtian graces and heavenly diſpoſitions, where-ever he goes. And when it is thus in the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, here is an evidence to others of their ſincerity in their profeſſion, to which all other manifeſtations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtleſs a great variety in the degrees of evidence that

that profeſſors do exhibit of their ſincerity, in their life and practice; as there is a variety in the fairneſs and clearneſs of accounts perſons give of the manner and method of their experiences: but undoubtedly ſuch a manifeſtation as has been deſcribed, of a Chriſtian ſpirit in practice, is vaſtly beyond the faireſt and brighteſt ſtory of particular ſteps and paſſages of experience, that ever was told. And in general, a manifeſtation of the ſincerity of a Chriſtian profeſſion in practice, is far better than a relation of experiences.

But yet,

*Thirdly*, It muſt be noted, agreeable to what was formerly obſerved, that no external manifeſtations and outward appearances whatſoever, that are viſible to the world, are infallible evidences of grace. Theſe manifeſtations that have been mentioned, are the beſt that mankind can have; and they are ſuch as do oblige Chriſtians entirely to embrace profeſſors as ſaints, and love them and rejoice in them as the children of God, and are ſufficient to give them as great ſatisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their conduct, or for any intent and purpoſe that needs to be anſwered in this world. But nothing that appears to them in their neighbour, can be ſufficient to beget an abſolute certainty concerning the ſtate of his ſoul: for they ſee not his heart, nor can they ſee all his external behaviour; for much of it is in ſecret, and hid from the eye of the world: and it is impoſſible certainly to determine, how far a man may go in many external appearances and imitations of grace, from other principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could ſee ſo much of what belongs to mens practice, as their own conſciences may ſee of it, it might be an infallible evidence of their ſtate, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus conſidered Chriſtian practice as the *beſt evidence* of the ſincerity of profeſſors *to others*, I now proceed,

2. To obſerve, that the ſcripture alſo ſpeaks of Chriſtian practice as a diſtinguiſhing and ſure evidence of grace to *perſons own conſciences*. This is very plain in 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*. And the teſtimony of our conſciences, with reſpect to our good deeds, is ſpoken of as that which may give us aſſurance of our own godlineſs; 1 John iii. 18. 19. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed*, (in the original it is ΕΡΓΩ *in work*), *and in truth. And hereby we know*

*that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* And the apostle Paul, in Heb. vi. speaks of *the work and labour of love*, of the Christian Hebrews, as that which both gave him a persuasion that they had something above the highest common illuminations, and also as that evidence which tended to give them the highest assurance of hope concerning themselves; Ver. 9. &c. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* So the apostle directs the Galatians to examine their behaviour or practice, that they might have rejoicing in themselves in their own happy state; Gal. vi. 4. *Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.* And the Psalmist says, Psal. cxix. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments*; *i. e.* then shall I be bold, and assured, and stedfast in my hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 19. 20. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Though Christ gives this firstly, as a rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the words that next follow he plainly shews, that he intends it also as a rule by which we should judge ourselves; *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that* DOTH THE WILL *of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,* &c.——*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me,* YE THAT WORK INIQUITY. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and* DOTH *them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.*——*And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and* DOTH THEM NOT, *shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.* I shall have occasion to mention other texts that shew the same thing, hereafter.

But for the greater clearness in this matter, I would *first*, shew how Christian practice, doing good works, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure sign to our own consciences, that we are real Christians. And, *secondly*, will prove, that this is the chief of all evidences that men can have of their own sincere godliness.

*First*,

*First*, I would shew how Christian practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure evidence to our own consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose, that when the scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments, that it has respect merely to what is external, or the motion and action of the body, without including any thing else, having no respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider mens actions so, and they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as the actions of the men, or any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience, nor disobedience; any more than the motions of the body in a convulsion. But the obedience and fruit that is spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man; and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the soul, consisting in the acts and practice of the soul. Not that I suppose, that when the scripture speaks, in this case, of gracious works, and fruit, and practice, that in these expressions is included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: because then, in these things being given as signs of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercise, and holy act of the soul is meant, and given as the sign of the holy principle, and good estate. Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the soul, and exertion of inward holiness, which there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the soul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here, for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are those that some call *immanent* acts; that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to any thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the saints often have in *contemplation*: when the exercise that is in the heart, does not directly proceed

*to*,

*to*, or terminate *in* any thing beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as all exercises of grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another kind of acts of grace, that are more strictly called *practical*, or effective exercises; because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a saint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures persecution, in the way of his duty, immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive of good works, not only in this sense, that they are of a *productive nature*, (for so are all exercises of true grace), but they are the *producing* acts. This is properly the exercise of grace in the act of the will; and this is properly the practice of the soul. And the soul is the immediate actor of no other practice but this: the motions of the body follow from the laws of union between the soul and body, which God, and not the soul has fixed, and does maintain. The act of the soul, and the exercise of grace, that is exerted in the performance of a good work, is the good work itself, so far as the soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the soul's good work. The determinations of the will, are indeed our very actions, so far as they are properly ours, as Dr Doddridge observes *. In this practice of the soul, is included the aim and intention of the soul which is the agent. For not only should we not look on the motions of a statue, doing justice or distributing alms by clock-work, as any acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would any body call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and materially agreeable to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did.——If the acts of obedience and good fruits spoken of, be looked upon, not as mere motions of the body, but as acts of the soul; the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind, in the action, must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, *&c.* otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or service done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these that I have now described, many of the martyrs have experienced

* Scripture-doctrine of salvation, Sermon I. p. 11.

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in a high degree. And all true ſaints live a life of ſuch acts of grace as theſe; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which theſe operative exertions of garce are the life and ſoul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the ſoul, more than the body; as much as the ſoul, in the conſtitution of the human nature, is the ſuperior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he looks at the practice of the ſoul; for the ſoul is the man in God's ſight, *For the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth, for he looketh on the heart.*

And thus it is, that obedience, good works, good fruit, are to be taken, when given in ſcripture as a ſure evidence to our own conſciences of a true principle of grace; even as including the obedience and practice of the ſoul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given in ſcripture as the main evidence of our true Chriſtianity to others, then is meant that in our practice which is viſible to them, even our outward actions: but when practice is given as a ſure evidence of our real Chriſtianity to our own conſciences, then is meant that in our practice which is viſible to our own conſciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion and exerciſe of the ſoul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own conſciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of the ſcripture, not only does the nature and reaſon of the thing ſhew, but it is plain by the ſcripture itſelf. Thus it is evident, that when Chriſt, at the concluſion of his ſermon on the mount, ſpeaks of *doing* or practiſing thoſe ſayings of his, as the grand ſign of profeſſors being true diſciples, without which he likens them to a man that built his houſe upon the ſand, and with which, to a man that built his houſe upon a rock; he has a reſpect, not only to the outward behaviour, but to the inward exerciſe of the mind in that behaviour: as is evident by obſerving what thoſe preceding ſayings of his are, that he refers to, when he ſpeaks of our doing or practiſing them; and we ſhall find they are ſuch as theſe; *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; bleſſed are they that mourn; bleſſed are the meek; bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; bleſſed are the merciful; bleſſed are the pure in heart; whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe*, &c.; *whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her*, &c.; *love your enemies; take no thought for your life*, and others of the like nature, which imply inward exerciſes: and when Chriſt ſays, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them*,

*them, he it is that loveth me;* he has evidently a ſpecial reſpect to that command ſeveral times repeated in the ſame diſcourſe, (which he calls, by way of eminence, *his commandment*), *that they ſhould love one another, as he had loved them:* (See chap. xiii. 34. 35. and chap. xv. 10. 12. 13. 14.) But this command reſpects chiefly an exerciſe of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the apoſtle John ſays, 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments;* he has plainly a principal reſpect to the ſame command, as appears by what follows, ver. 7.—11. and 2d Epiſt. ver. 5. 6.: and when we are told in ſcripture that men ſhall at the laſt day be judged *according to their works*, and *all ſhall receive according to the things done in the body;* it is not to be underſtood only of outward acts; for if ſo, why is God ſo often ſpoken of as ſearching the hearts and trying the reins, *that he may render to every one according to his works?* as Rev. ii. 23. *And all the churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one according to his works.* Jer. xvii. 9. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* But if by *his ways, and the fruit of his doings*, is meant only the actions of his body, what need of *ſearching the heart and reins*, in order to know them? Hezekiah in his ſickneſs pleads his practice as an evidence of his title to God's favour, as including, not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart, Iſ. xxxviii. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.*

Though in this great evidence of ſincerity that the ſcripture gives us, what is inward is of greateſt importance; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretenſions that any man can have to evidences of godlineſs, who externally lives wickedly; becauſe the great evidence lies in that inward exerciſe and practice of the ſoul, which conſiſts in the act of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known, that theſe commanding acts of the will are not one way, and the actions of the bodily organs another: for the unalterable law of nature is, that they ſhould be united, as long as ſoul and body are united, and the organs are not ſo deſtroyed as to be incapable of thoſe motions that the ſoul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public wor-

ſhip,

ſhip, while his feet carry him to a tavern or brothel-houſe; or that the commanding act of his will was to give ſuch a piece of money he had in his hand to a poor beggar, while his hand at the ſame inſtant kept it back, and held it faſt.

*Secondly*, I proceed to ſhew, that Chriſtian practice, taken in the ſenſe that has been explained, is *the chief* of all the evidences of a ſaving ſincerity in religion, to the conſciences of the profeſſors of it; much to be preferred to the method of the firſt convictions, enlightenings, and comforts in converſion, or any immanent diſcoveries or exerciſes of grace whatſoever, that begin and end in contemplation *. The evidence of this appears by the following arguments.

*Argument* I. Reaſon plainly ſhews, that thoſe things which put it to the proof what men will actually cleave to and prefer in their practice, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as has been obſerved already, conſiſts in ſetting God higheſt in the heart, in chuſing him before other things, in having a heart to ſell all for Chriſt,

* "Look upon John, Chriſt's beloved diſciple and boſom companion; he had received the anointing to know him that is true, *and he knew that he knew him*, 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? He might be deceived; (as it is ſtrange to ſee what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it; as honeſt men are reputed to have weak brains, and never ſaw the depths of the ſecrets of God); what is his *laſt* proof? *Becauſe we keep his commandments.*" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 131.

"A man may know his preſent union to the Lord Jeſus, by a work; 1 John ii. 4. *He that ſaith I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar.*—Yes, that is true negatively; but may a man, ought a man, to ſee or know his union poſitively by this? Anſ. ver. 5. Many ſaid they did know and love the Lord, but *he that keeps his words.*—O they are ſweet! It is heaven to cleave to him in every command; it is death to depart from any command: *hereby know we that we are in him.* If it were poſſible to aſk of angels, how they know they are not devils, they would anſwer, the Lord's will is ours." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 134.

"If the queſtion be, Whom doth the Lord Jeſus love? you need not go to heaven for it, the word is nigh thee, *Thoſe that love Chriſt.* Who are thoſe? *Thoſe that keep his commandments.*" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 138.

"Will you have Chriſt ſit in heaven, and not look that he ſubdue your luſts by the work of his grace, and ſo ſway your hearts? You deſpiſe his kingdom then. Do you ſeek for pardon in the blood of Chriſt, and never look for the virtue and end of that blood to waſh you and make you without ſpot, *&c.*? You deſpiſe his prieſthood and blood then. Do you look for Chriſt to do work for you, and you not do Chriſt's work, and bring forth fruit to him? You deſpiſe his honour then, John xv. 8. If I were to diſcover a hypocrite, or a falſe heart, this I would ſay, It is he that ſhall ſet up Chriſt, but loath his work." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 140.

*&c.*—But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's heart prefers. As for inſtance, when it is ſo that God and other things come to ſtand in competition, God is as it were ſet before a man on one hand, and his worldly intereſt or pleaſure on the other, (as it often is ſo in the courſe of a man's life), his behaviour in ſuch caſe, in actually cleaving to the one and forſaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity conſiſts in forſaking all for Chriſt in heart; but to forſake all for Chriſt in heart, is the very ſame thing as to have an heart to forſake all for Chriſt: but certainly the proper trial whether a man has an heart to forſake all for Chriſt, is his being actually put to it, the having Chriſt and other things coming in competition, that he muſt actually or practically cleave to one and forſake the other. To forſake all for Chriſt in heart, is the ſame thing as to have a heart to forſake all for Chriſt when called to it: but the higheſt proof to ourſelves and others, that we have an heart to forſake all for Chriſt when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or ſo far as called to it. To follow Chriſt in heart, is to have an heart to follow him. To deny ourſelves in heart for Chriſt, is the ſame thing as to have an heart to deny ourſelves for him in fact. The main and moſt proper proof of a man's having an heart to any thing, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleaſes, is his doing of it. When a man is at liberty whether to ſpeak or keep ſilence, the moſt proper evidence of his having an heart to ſpeak, is his ſpeaking. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or ſit ſtill, the proper proof of his having an heart to walk, is his walking. Godlineſs conſiſts not in an heart to intend to do the will of God, but in an heart to do it. The children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27. 28. 29. *Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God ſhall ſay; and ſpeak thou unto us all that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye ſpake unto me; and the Lord ſaid unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have ſpoken unto thee: they have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken. O that there were ſuch an* HEART *in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* The people manifeſted that they had *a heart to intend to keep God's commandments*, and to be very forward in thoſe intentions; but God manifeſts, that this was far from being the thing that he deſired, wherein true godlineſs conſiſts, even *an heart actually to keep them.*

It

It is therefore exceeding abſurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of univerſal holineſs in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that ſuch men do not love God above all. It is fooliſh to diſpute againſt plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of ſin, and yet flatter themſelves that they ſhall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy perſons, without a holy life and practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the apoſtle ſays, (ſpeaking of mens doing good works, and living an holy life, thereby exhibiting evidence of their title to everlaſting life), Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* As much as to ſay, "Do not "deceive yourſelves with an expectation of reaping life ever-"laſting hereafter, if you do not ſow to the Spirit here; it is "in vain to think that God will be made a fool of by you, "that he will be ſhammed and baffled with ſhadows inſtead of "ſubſtance, and with vain pretences, inſtead of that good "fruit which he expects, when the contrary to what you pre-"tend, appears plainly in your life, before his face." In this manner the word *mock* is ſometimes uſed in ſcripture. Thus Delilah ſays to Samſon, *Behold, thou haſt mocked me, and told me lies*, Judge xvi. 10. 13. *i. e.* "Thou haſt baffled me, as "though you would make a fool of me, as if I might be eaſily "turned off with any vain pretence, inſtead of the truth." So it is ſaid that Lot, when he told his ſons-in-law that God would deſtroy that place, *he ſeemed as one that mocked to his ſons-in-law*, Gen. xix. 14. *i. e.* he ſeemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were ſuch credulous fools as to regard ſuch bugbears. But the great Judge, whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretences, without a holy life. If in his name men have propheſied and wrought miracles, and have had faith, ſo that they could remove mountains, and caſt out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great reſemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding place has been ſo dark and deep, that no human ſkill nor ſearch could find them out; yet if they are *workers* or *practiſers of iniquity*, they cannot hide their hypocriſy from their Judge; Job xxxiv. 22. *There is no darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death, where the* WORKERS OF INIQUITY *may hide themſelves.* Would a wiſe prince ſuffer himſelf to be fooled and baffled by a ſubject, who ſhould pretend that he was a loyal ſubject, and ſhould tell

his prince that he had an entire affection to him, and that at such and such a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time stirring up sedition against him? or would a master suffer himself to be shammed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences of love and honour towards him in his heart, and a great sense of his worthiness and kindness to him, when at the same time he refused to obey him, and he could get no service done by him?

*Argument* II. As reason shews, that those things which occur in the course of life, that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the proper trial of the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; so the same are represented as the proper trial of the sincerity of professors, in the scripture. There we find that such things are called by that very name, *trials* or *temptations*, (which I before observed are both words of the same signification). The things that put it to the proof, whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur that make the practice of duty difficult and cross to other principles besides the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both set before men together, for their actual and practical choice; and it comes to this, that we cannot hold to both, but one or the other must be forsaken. And these things are all over the scripture called by the name of *trials* or *proofs* *. And they are called by this name, because hereby professors are tried and proved of what sort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the reality of a supreme love to God is brought to the test of experiment and fact; they are the proper proofs, in which it is truly determined by experience, whether men have a thorough disposition of heart to cleave to God or no; Deut. viii. 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, whether thou*

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Heb. xi. 36. 1 Pet. i. 7. Chap. iv. 12. Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. viii. 2. 16. Chap. xiii. 3. Exod. xv. 25. Chap. xvi. 4. Judges ii. 22. Chap. iii. 1. 4 Psal. lxvi. 10 11. Dan. xii. 10. Rev. iii. 10. Job xxiii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Jam. i. 12. Rev. ii. 10. Luke viii. 13. Acts xx. 19. Jam. i. 2. 3. 1 Pet. i. 6.

*wouldst*

*wouldſt keep his commandments, or no*, Judg. ii. 21. 22. *I alſo will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joſhua left when he died: that through them I may prove Iſrael, whether they will keep the way of the Lord.* So chap. iii. 1. 4. and Exod. xvi. 4. And the ſcripture, when it calls theſe difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itſelf to mean thereby, the trial or experiment of their faith, Jam. i. 2. 3. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.* 1 Pet. i. 6. 7. *Now for a ſeaſon ye are in heavineſs, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold*, &c. So the apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of that expenſive duty of parting with our ſubſtance to the poor, as the proof of the ſincerity of the love of Chriſtians, 2 Cor. viii. 8. And the difficulties of religion are often repreſented in ſcripture as being the trial of profeſſors, in the ſame manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and ſilver; Pſal. lxvi. 10. 11. *Thou, O God, haſt proved us: thou haſt tried us, as ſilver is tried: thou broughteſt us into the net, thou laidſt affliction upon our loins.* Zech. xiii. 9. *And I will bring the third part of them through the fire; and I will refine them as ſilver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried.* That which has the colour and appearance of gold, is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it ſeems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, becauſe they try thoſe that have the profeſſion and appearance of ſaints, whether they are what they appear to be, real ſaints. If we put true gold into the furnace, we ſhall find its great value and preciouſneſs; ſo the truth and ineſtimable value of the virtues of a true Chriſtian appear, when under theſe trials; 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory.* True and pure gold will come out of the furnace in full weight: ſo true ſaints when tried come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. Chriſt diſtinguiſhes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is *gold tried in the fire*, Rev. iii. 17. 18. So that it is evident that theſe things are called *trials* in ſcripture, principally as they try or prove the ſincerity of profeſſors. And from what has been now obſerved, it is evident that they are the moſt proper trial or proof of their ſincerity; inaſmuch as the very meaning of the word *trial*, as it is ordinarily uſed in ſcripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a profeſſor's duty, as the trial or experiment of his ſincerity. If *trial of ſincerity* be the proper name

of

of these difficulties of religion, then doubtless these difficulties of religion are *properly and eminently* the trial of sincerity; for they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And if it be so, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof or experiment of the sincerity of professors; then certainly the result of the trial or experiment, (that is, persons behaviour or practice under such trials), is the proper and eminent evidence of their sincerity. For they are called trials or proofs, only with regard to the result, and because the effect is eminently the *proof*, or *evidence*. And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the conscience of those that are the subjects of these trials. For when God is said by these things to *try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no*; we are not to understand, that it is for his own information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their sincerity; (for he needs no trials for his information); but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences †. Thus when God is said to prove Israel by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in Canaan, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments, or no; it must be understood, that it was to discover them to themselves, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God tempted or tried Abraham with that difficult command of offering up his son, it was not for his satisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for Abraham's own greater satisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favour of God to him. When Abraham had proved faithful under this trial, God says to him, *Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not with-held thy son, thine only son from me.* Which plainly implies, that in this practical exercise of Abraham's grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to Abraham's conscience; because God himself gives it to Abraham as such, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him, as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience of his being

† "I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men, are to shew them to themselves, and to the world, that they be but counterfeits; and to make saints known to themselves, the better.—Rom. v. 5. *Tribulation works trial, and that hope.* Prov. xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 191.

upright

upright in the ſight of his Judge. Which proves what I ſay, that holy practice under trials is the higheſt evidence of the ſincerity of profeſſors to their own conſciences. And we find that Chriſt from time to time took the ſame method to convince the conſciences of thoſe that pretended friendſhip to him, and to ſhew them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, Matth. xix. 16. *&c.* He ſeemed to ſhew a great reſpect to Chriſt; he came kneeling to him, and called him *good maſter*, and made a great profeſſion of obedience to the commandments; but Chriſt tried him by bidding him *go and ſell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his croſs, and follow him*; telling him, *that then he ſhould have treaſure in heaven.* So he tried another that we read of Matth. viii. 20. He made a great profeſſion of reſpect to Chriſt: ſays he, *Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* Chriſt immediately puts his friendſhip to the proof, by telling him that *the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts, but that the Son of man had not where to lay his head.* And thus Chriſt is wont ſtill to try profeſſed diſciples in general, in his providence. So the ſeed ſown in every kind of ground, ſtony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which in all appears alike, when it firſt ſprings up; yet is tried, and the difference made to appear, by the burning heat of the ſun.

Seeing therefore that theſe are the things that God makes uſe of to try us, it is undoubtedly the ſureſt way for us to paſs a right judgement on ourſelves, to try ourſelves by the ſame things. Theſe trials of his are not for his information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The ſureſt way to know our gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that end, that we may ſee what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building ſtands ſtrong or no, we muſt look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat, has the real ſubſtance of wheat, or be only chaff, we muſt obſerve it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a ſtaff be ſtrong, or a rotten broken reed, we muſt obſerve it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourſelves juſtly, we muſt weigh ourſelves in God's ſcales, that he makes uſe of to weigh us *. Theſe trials

* Dr Sibbs, in his *Bruiſed Reed*, ſays, "When Chriſt's will cometh in competition with any worldly loſs or gain, yet if then, in that particular caſe, the heart will ſtoop to Chriſt, it is a true ſign. For the trueſt trial of the power of grace, is in ſuch particular caſes as touch us neareſt; for there our

trials in the courſe of our practice, are as it were the balances in which our hearts are weighed, or in which Chriſt and the world, or Chriſt and his competitors, as to the eſteem and regard they have in our hearts, are weighed, or are put into oppoſite ſcales, by which there is opportunity to ſee which preponde-

our corruption maketh the greateſt head. When Chriſt came home to the young man in the goſpel, he loſt a diſciple of him."

Mr Flavel ſpeaks of a holy practice under trials, as the greateſt evidence of grace. "No man (ſays he) can ſay what he is, whether his graces be true or falſe, until they be tried and examined by thoſe things, which are to them as fire is to gold." *Touchſtone of Sincerity*, Chap. 4. ſect. 1. Again, ſpeaking of great difficulties and ſufferings in the way of duty, wherein a perſon muſt actually part with what is deareſt of a worldly nature, or with his duty; he ſays, "That ſuch ſufferings as theſe will diſcover the falſeneſs and rottenneſs of mens hearts, cannot be doubted; if you conſider, that this is the fire deſigned by God for this very uſe and purpoſe, to ſeparate the gold from the droſs. So you will find it, 1 Pet. iv. 12, "Beloved, "think it not ſtrange concerning the "fiery trial that is to try you," *i. e.* The very deſign and aim of providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of perſecution (in a ſuitable notion) called the hour of temptation or probation, Rev. iii. 10. For then profeſſors are ſifted to the very bran, ſearched to the very bottom principles. This is "the day that burns as "an oven; all that do wickedly ſhall "be as ſtubble," Mal. iv. 1. For in that day the predominant intereſt muſt appear and be diſcovered, it can be concealed no longer. "No man can "ſerve two maſters," ſaith Chriſt, Luke xvi. 13. A man may ſerve many maſters, if they all command the ſame thing, or things ſubordinate to each other: but he cannot ſerve two maſters, if their commands claſh and interfere with each other: and ſuch are the commands of Chriſt and the fleſh in a ſuffering hour:—thus the two intereſts come in full oppoſition. And now have but patience and wait a little, and you will diſcern which is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and you know not which of the two is his maſter: ſtay but a little, until their path parts, and then you ſhall quickly ſee who is his maſter: ſo it is in this caſe." *Ibid.* Chap. viii. § 3. And in another chapter he ſays, "Great numbers of perſons are deceived and deſtroyed by truſting to ſeeming untried grace. This was the miſerable condition of the Laodicean profeſſors: they reckoned themſelves rich, but were really poor: all is not gold that gliſters: their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole eſtate lay in ſome precious ſtone, ſuppoſe a rich diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to ſee whether it will bear a ſmart ſtroke with the hammer, or fly like a Briſtol diamond!" *Ibid.* Chap. x. § 3. Again in the ſame place, "The promiſes of ſalvation are made over to tried grace, and that only as will endure the trial."

"The Lord will try you. God hath his trying times: and they were never ſent, but to diſcover who were droſs, who were gold. And the main end of all God's trials, is to diſcover this truth that I now am preſſing upon you. Some have a thorough work; and now the trial diſcovers the truth, as in Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. Some have a ſuperficial work, and they fall in trial, as in Saul; and it doth diſcover it was but an overly work. For this is the queſtion God makes, Is it thorough or no? Ay, ſaith the carnal heart; Yes, ſaith a gracious heart. Hence it is ſtrange to ſee what men will do when a trial comes." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 219.

"There is an hour of temptation which tries men, which will diſcover men indeed. *Shepard's Parable*, Part II. p 60.

rates.

rates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Chriſt, and the other to the objects of his luſts, to ſee which way he will go, or is brought, and as it were ſet between Chriſt and the world, Chriſt on the right hand, and the world on the left, ſo that if he goes to one he muſt leave the other, to ſee which his heart inclines moſt to, or which preponderates in his heart; this is juſt the ſame thing as laying Chriſt and the world in two oppoſite ſcales: and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is juſt the ſame thing, as the ſinking of one ſcale, and riſing of the other. A man's practice therefore, under the trials of God's providence, are as much the proper experiment and evidence of the ſuperior inclination of his heart, as the motion of the balance, with different weights, in oppoſite ſcales, is the proper experiment of the ſuperior weight.

*Argument* III. Another argument, that holy practice, in the ſenſe which has been explained, is the higheſt kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the conſciences of Chriſtians, is, that in practice, grace, in ſcripture ſtyle, is ſaid to be *made perfect*, or to be *finiſhed*. So the apoſtle James ſays, Jam. ii. 22. *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect*, or *finiſhed?* (as the word in the original properly ſignifies). So the love of God is ſaid to be made perfect, or finiſhed, in keeping his commandments; 1 John ii. 4. 5. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: but whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.* The commandment of Chriſt which the apoſtle has eſpecial reſpect to, when he here ſpeaks of our keeping his commandments, is (as I obſerved before) that great commandment of his, which reſpects deeds of love to our brethren; as appears by the following verſes. Again, the love of God is ſaid to be perfected, in the ſame ſenſe, Chap. iv. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* Here doubtleſs the apoſtle has ſtill reſpect to loving one another, in the ſame manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, ſpeaking of loving one another, as a ſign of the love of God, ver. 17. 18. *Whoſo hath this world's goods, and ſhutteth up his bowels*, &c. *how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed*, (or in work), *and in truth.* By thus *loving in work*, the apoſtle ſays *the love of God is perfected in us.* Grace is ſaid to be perfected or finiſhed in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to

that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency and design of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. As the tree is made perfect in the fruit: it is not perfected in the seed's being planted in the ground; it is not perfected in the first quickening of the seed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth blossoms: but when it has brought forth good ripe fruit, then it is perfected, therein it reaches its end, the design of the tree is finished: all that belongs to the tree is completed and brought to its proper effect in the fruit. So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made perfect or finished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, Jam. i. 15. *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Here are three steps; *first*, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and *nextly*, here is its conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and *lastly*, here is the fruit that was conceived actually brought forth, in the wicked work and practice. And this the apostle calls the *finishing* or *perfecting* of sin: for the word in the original is the same that is translated *perfected* in those forementioned places.

Now certainly if it be so, if grace be in this manner made perfect, in its fruit, if these practical exercises of grace are those exercises wherein grace is brought to its proper effect and end, and the exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its design, tendency and operation, is completed and crowned; then these exercises must be the highest evidences of grace, above all other exercises. Certainly the proper nature and tendency of every principle, must appear best and most fully, in its most perfect exercises, or in those exercises wherein its nature is most completely exerted, and its tendency most fully answered and crowned, in its proper effect and end. If we would see the proper nature of any thing whatsoever, and see it in its full distinction from other things; let us look upon it in the finishing of it. The apostle James says, *by works is faith made perfect:* and introduces this as an argument to prove that works are the chief evidence of faith, whereby the sincerity of the professors of faith is justified, Jam. ii. And the apostle John, after he had once and again told us, that love was made perfect in keeping Christ's commandments, observes, 1 John iv. 18. *That perfect love casteth out fear:* meaning (at least in part) love made perfect in this sense; agreeable to what he had said in the foregoing

foregoing chapter, *That by loving in deed, or work, we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts*, ver. 18. 19.

*Argument* IV. Another thing which makes it evident that holy practice is the principal evidence that we ought to make uſe of in judging both of our own and others ſincerity, is, that this evidence is above all others inſiſted on in ſcripture. A common acquaintance with the ſcripture, together with a little attention and obſervation, will be ſufficient to ſhew to any one, that this is ten times more inſiſted on as a note of true piety, throughout the ſcripture, from the beginning of Geneſis to the end of Revelations, than any thing elſe. And in the New Teſtament, where Chriſt and his apoſtles do expreſsly, and of declared purpoſe, lay down ſigns of true godlineſs, this is almoſt wholly inſiſted on. It may be obſerved, that Chriſt and his apoſtles do not only often ſay thoſe things, in their diſcourſing on the great doctrines of religion, which do ſhew what the nature of true godlineſs muſt be, or from whence the nature and ſigns of it may be inferred by juſt conſequence, and often occaſionally mention many things which do appertain to godlineſs; but they do alſo often, of ſet purpoſe, give ſigns and marks for the trial of profeſſors, putting them upon trying themſelves by the ſigns they give, introducing what they ſay with ſuch like expreſſions as theſe; *By this you ſhall know that you know God: By this are manifeſt the children of God, and the children of the devil: He that hath this, builds on a good foundation; he that hath it not, builds on the ſand: Hereby we ſhall aſſure our hearts: He is the man that loveth Chriſt*, &c. But I can find no place, where either Chriſt or his apoſtles do in this manner give ſigns of godlineſs, (though the places are many), but where Chriſtian practice is almoſt the only thing inſiſted on. Indeed in many of theſe places, *love to the brethren* is ſpoken of as a ſign of godlineſs; and (as I have obſerved before) there is no one virtuous affection or diſpoſition ſo often expreſsly ſpoken of as a ſign of true grace, as our having love one to another: but then the ſcriptures explain themſelves to intend chiefly this love as exerciſed and expreſſed in practice, or in deeds of love. So does the apoſtle John (who above all others inſiſts on love to the brethren as a ſign of godlineſs) moſt expreſsly explain himſelf, in that 1 John iii. 14. &c. *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death —— Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the*

*love of God in him? My little children, let us love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, (i. e.* in deeds of love), *and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* So that when the scripture so much insists on our loving one another, as a great sign of godliness, we are not thereby to understand the immanent workings of affection which men feel one to another, so much as the soul's practising all the duties of the second table of the law; all which the New Testament tells us again and again, a true love one to another comprehends; Rom. xiii. 8. and 10. Gal. v. 14. Matth. xxii. 39. 40. So that really, there is no place in the New Testament, where the declared design is to give signs of godliness, but that holy practice, and keeping Christ's commandments, is the mark chosen out from all others to be insisted on. Which is an invincible argument, that it is the chief of all the evidences of godliness: unless we suppose, that when Christ and his apostles on design set themselves about this business of giving signs, by which professing Christians in all ages might determine their state, they did not know how to choose signs so well as we could have chosen for them. But if we make the word of Christ our rule, then undoubtedly those marks which Christ and his apostles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourselves by them, those same marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to make use of, in the trial of ourselves *. And surely those things which Christ and his apostles chiefly insisted on in the rules they gave, ministers ought chiefly to insist on in the rules they give. To insist much on those things that the scripture insists little on, and to insist very little on those things on which the scripture insists much, is a dangerous thing; because it is going out of God's way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide others, in an unscriptural manner. God knew which way of leading and guiding souls was safest and best for them: he insisted so much on some things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be insisted on; and let other things more alone, as a wise God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the weight of the trial there. As the Sabbath was made for man, so the scriptures were made for man; and they are by infinite wisdom fitted for our use and benefit. We should therefore make them our guide in all things, in our thoughts of religion, and of ourselves. And

* "It is a sure rule, (says Dr Preston), that what the scriptures bestow much words on, we should have much thoughts on; and what the Holy Ghost urgeth most, we should prize most." *Church's Carriage.*

for

for us to make that great which the ſcripture makes little, and that little which the ſcripture makes great, tends to give us a monſtrous idea of religion; and (at leaſt indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourſelves, and to eſtabliſh deluſion and hypocriſy.

*Argument* V. Chriſtian practice *is plainly ſpoken of* in the *word of God*, as the main evidence of the truth of grace, not only to others, but to mens own conſciences. It is not only more ſpoken of and inſiſted on than other ſigns, but in many places where it is ſpoken of, it is repreſented as the chief of all evidences. This is plain in the manner of expreſſion from time to time. If God were now to ſpeak from heaven to reſolve our doubts concerning ſigns of godlineſs, and ſhould give ſome particular ſign, that by it all might know whether they were ſincerely godly or not, with ſuch emphatical expreſſions as theſe, The man that has ſuch a qualification or mark, *that is the man that is a true ſaint, that is the very man, by this you may know, this is the thing by which it is manifeſt who are ſaints and who are ſinners, ſuch men as theſe are ſaints indeed;* ſhould not we look upon it as a thing beyond doubt, that this was given as a ſpecial, and eminently diſtinguiſhing note of true godlineſs? But this is the very caſe with reſpect to the ſign of grace I am ſpeaking of; God has again and again uttered himſelf in his word in this very manner, concerning Chriſtian practice, as John xiv. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,* HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME. This Chriſt in this place gives to the diſciples, not ſo much to guide them in judging of others, but to apply to themſelves for their own comfort after his departure, as appears by every word of the context. And by the way I would obſerve, that not only the emphaſis with which Chriſt utters himſelf is remarkable, but alſo his ſo much inſiſting on, and repeating the matter, as he does in the context; ver. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* Ver. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words.* And ver. 24. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings.* And in the next chapter over and over; ver. 2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.* Ver. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.* Ver. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.* We have this mark laid down with the ſame emphaſis again, John viii. 31. *If ye continue in my word,* THEN *are ye my diſciples* INDEED.

INDEED. And again, 1 John ii. 3. HEREBY *we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And ver. 5. *Whoſo keepeth his word,* IN HIM VERILY *is the love of God perfected:* HEREBY *know we that we are in him.* And chap. iii. 18. 19. *Let us love in deed, and in truth:* HEREBY *we know that we are of the truth.* What is tranſlated *hereby*, would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the original, BY THIS *we do know.*—— And how evidently is holy practice ſpoken of as the grand note of diſtinction between the children of God and the children of the devil, in ver. 10. of the ſame chapter? IN THIS *the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil.* Speaking of a holy, and a wicked practice, as may be ſeen in all the context: as ver. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* Ver. 6.——10. *Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not: whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth ſin, is of the devil.—Whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not.—Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God.* So we have the like emphaſis, 2 John 6. THIS IS LOVE, *that we walk after his commandments:* that is, (as we muſt underſtand it), *This is the proper evidence of love.* So 1 John v. 3. THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, *that we keep his commandments.* So the apoſtle James ſpeaking of the proper evidences of true and pure religion, ſays, Jam. i. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father,* IS THIS, *To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.* We have the like emphatical expreſſions uſed about the ſame thing in the Old Teſtament; Job xxviii. 28. *And unto man he ſaid, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding.* Jer. xxii. 15. 16. *Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgement and juſtice?—He judged the cauſe of the poor and needy: was not this to know me? ſaith the Lord.* Pſal. xxxiv. 11. &c. *Come, ye children, unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from ſpeaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; ſeek peace and purſue it.* Pſal. xv. at the beginning, *Who ſhall abide in thy tabernacle? who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly,* &c. Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. *Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,* &c. Pſal. cxix. 1. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Ver. 6. *Then ſhall*

*I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments.* Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*

So the ſcripture never uſes ſuch emphatical expreſſions concerning any other ſigns of hypocriſy, and unſoundneſs of heart, as concerning an unholy practice. So Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. *Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,* &c. *ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.* Eph. v. 5. 6. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon,* &c. *hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words.* 1 John iii. 7. 8. *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth ſin, is of the devil.* Chap. ii. 4. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And Chap. i. 6. *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth.* James i. 26. *If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* Chap. iii. 14. 15. *If ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* Pſal. cxxv. 5. *As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* Iſ. xxxv. 8. *An high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs; the unclean ſhall not paſs over it.* Rev. xxi. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it, whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* And in many places, *Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity.*

*Argument* VI. Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the chief of all the ſigns of the ſincerity of profeſſors, not only to the world, but to their own conſciences, is, that this is the grand evidence which will hereafter be made uſe of, before the judgement-ſeat of God; according to which his judgement will be regulated, and the ſtate of every profeſſor of religion unalterably determined. In the future judgement, there will be an open trial of profeſſors; and evidences will be made uſe of in the judgement. For God's future judging of men, in order to their eternal retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and paſſing a judgement upon the ſtate of mens hearts, in his own mind; but it will be a declarative judgement: and the end of it will be, not God's forming a judgement within himſelf, but the manifeſtation of his judgement.

judgement, and the righteousness of it, to mens own consciences, and to the world. And therefore the day of judgement is called *the day of the* revelation *of the righteous judgement of God*, Rom. ii. 5. And the end of God's future trial and judgement of men, as to the part that each one in particular is to have in the judgement, will be especially the clear manifestation of God's righteous judgement, with respect to him, to his conscience: as is manifest by Matth. xviii. 31. to the end. Chap. xx. 8.—15. Chap. xxii. 11. 12. 13. Chap. xxv. 19.—30. and ver. 35. to the end. Luke xix. 15.—23. And therefore though God needs no medium, whereby to make the truth evident to himself, yet evidences will be made use of in his future judging of men. And doubtless the evidences that will be made use of in their trial, will be such as will be best fitted to serve the ends of the judgement; *viz.* the manifestation of the righteous judgement of God, not only to the world, but to mens own consciences. But the scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand evidences which the Judge will make use of in the trial, for these ends, according to which the judgement of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible sentence passed, will be mens works, or practice, here in this world: Rev. xx. 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened:—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* So ver. 13. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* 2 Cor. v. 10. *For we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad.* So mens practice is the only evidence that Christ represents the future judgement as regulated by, in that most particular description of the day of judgement, which we have in the holy Bible, Matth. xxv. at the latter end. See also Rom. ii. 6.—13. Jer. xvii. 10. Job xxxiv. 11. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Rev. xxii. 12. Matth. xvi. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Ezek. xxxiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17. The Judge at the day of judgement, will not (for the conviction of mens own consciences, and to manifest them to the world), go about to examine men, as to the method of their experiences, or set every man to tell his story of the manner of his conversion; but his works will be brought forth, as evidences of what he is, what he has done in darkness and in light; Eccl. xii. 14. *For God will bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it*

*it be evil.* In the trial that profeſſors ſhall be the ſubjects of, in the future judgement, God will make uſe of the ſame evidences, to manifeſt them to themſelves and to the world, which he makes uſe of to manifeſt them, in the temptations or trials of his providence here, *viz.* their practice, in caſes wherein Chriſt and other things come into actual and immediate competition. At the day of judgement, God, for the manifeſtation of his righteous judgement, will weigh profeſſors in a balance that is viſible. And the balance will be the ſame that he weighs men in now; which has been already deſcribed.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that mens works (taken in the ſenſe that has been explained) are the higheſt evidences by which they ought to try themſelves. Certainly that which our ſupreme Judge will chiefly make uſe of to judge us by, when we come to ſtand before him, we ſhould chiefly make uſe of, to judge ourſelves by *. If it had not been revealed in what manner, and by what evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter, how natural would it be for one to ſay, "O "that I knew what token God will chiefly look for and inſiſt "upon in the laſt and deciſive judgement, and which he ex- "pects that all ſhould be able to produce, who would then be "accepted of him, and according to which ſentence ſhall be "paſſed; that I might know what token or evidence eſpecially "to look at and ſeek after now, as I would be ſure not to fail "then." And ſeeing God has ſo plainly and abundantly revealed what this token or evidence is, ſurely if we act wiſely, we ſhall regard it as of the greateſt importance.

Now from all that has been ſaid, I think it to be abundantly manifeſt, that Chriſtian practice is the moſt proper evidence of the gracious ſincerity of profeſſors, to themſelves and others; and the chief of all the marks of grace, the ſign of ſigns, and evidence of evidences, that which ſeals and crowns all other ſigns.——I had rather have the teſtimony of my conſcience, that I have ſuch a ſaying of my ſupreme Judge on my ſide, as that, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;* than the judgement and fulleſt approbation of all the wiſe, ſound, and experienced divines, that

* "That which God maketh a rule of his own judgement, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a ſure rule for every man to judge himſelf by. That which we ſhall be judged by at the laſt day, is a ſure rule to apply to ourſelves for the preſent. Now by our obedience and works he judgeth us. "He will give to every man "according to his works." *Dr Preſton's Church's Carriage.*

have lived this thousand years, on the most exact and critical examination of my experiences, as to the manner of my conversion. Not that there are no other good evidences of a state of grace but this. There may be other exercises of grace, besides these efficient exercises, which the saints may have in contemplation, that may be very satisfying to them: but yet this is the chief and most proper evidence. There may be several good evidences that a tree is a fig-tree; but the highest and most proper evidence of it is, that it actually bears figs. It is possible, that a man may have a good assurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain assurance, by this great evidence I am speaking of.—If a man hears that a great treasure is offered him, in a distant place, on condition that he will prize it so much, as to be willing to leave what he possesses at home, and go a journey for it, over the rocks and mountains that are in the way, to the place where it is; it is possible the man may be well assured, that he values the treasure to the degree spoken of, as soon as the offer is made him; he may feel a willingness to go for the treasure, within him, beyond all doubt: but yet, this does not hinder but that his actual going for it, is the highest and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an evidence to himself, his outward actions, and the motions of his body in his journey, are not considered alone, exclusive of the action of his mind, and a consciousness within himself, of the thing that moves him, and the end he goes for; otherwise his bodily motion is no evidence to him, of his prizing the treasure. In such a manner is Christian practice the most proper evidence of a saving value of *the pearl of great price, and treasure hid in the field.*

Christian practice is the sign of signs, in this sense, that it is the great evidence, which confirms and crowns all other signs of godliness. There is no one grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the truth of it. As it is with the members of our bodies, and all our utensils, the proper proof of the soundness and goodness of them, is in the use of them; so it is with our graces, (which are given to be used in practice, as much as our hands and feet, or the tools with which we work, or the arms with which we fight), the proper trial and proof of them is in their exercise in practice. Most of the things we use are serviceable to us, and so have their serviceableness proved, in some pressure, straining, agitation, or collision. So it is with a bow, a sword, an ax, a saw, a cord, a chain, a staff, a foot, a tooth, *&c.*

And

And they that are so weak, as not to bear the strain or pressure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So it is with all the virtues of the mind. The proper trial and proof of them, is in being exercised under those temptations and trials that God brings us under, in the course of his providence, and in being put to such service as strains hard upon the principles of nature.

Practice is the proper proof of the true and saving *knowledge of God*: as appears by that of the apostle already mentioned, *Hereby do we know that we know him, that we keep his commandments.* It is in vain for us to *profess that we know God*, if *in works we deny him*, Tit. i. 16. And if we *know God, but glorify him not as God*; our knowledge will only condemn us, and not save us, Rom. i 21. The great note of that knowledge which saves and makes happy, is, that it is practical; John xiii. 17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Job xxviii. 28. *To depart from evil is understanding.*

Holy practice is the proper evidence of *repentance.* When the Jews professed repentance, when they came confessing their sins, to John, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; he directed them to the right way of getting and exhibiting proper evidences of the truth of their repentance, when he said to them, *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. Which was agreeable to the practice of the apostle Paul; see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and mercy are from time to time promised to him who has this evidence of true repentance, that he forsakes his sin; Prov. xxviii. 13. and Is. lv. 7. and many other places.

Holy practice is the proper evidence of a *saving faith.* It is evident that the apostle James speaks of works, as what does eminently justify faith, or (which is the same thing) justify the professors of faith, and vindicate and manifest the sincerity of their profession, not only to the world, but to their own consciences: as is evident by the instance he gives of Abraham, Jam. ii. 21.—24. And in ver. 20. and 26. he speaks of the practical and working nature of faith, as the very life and soul of it; in the same manner, that the active nature and substance, which is in the body of a man, is the life and soul of that. And if so, doubtless practice is the proper evidence of the life and soul of true faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead faith. For doubtless, practice is the most proper evidence of a practical nature, and operation the most proper evidence of an operative nature.

Practice is the best evidence of a saving *belief of the truth.*

That is ſpoken of as the proper evidence of the *truth's being in* a profeſſing Chriſtian, that *he walks in the truth*, 3 John 3. *I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth.*

Practice is the moſt proper evidence of a true *coming to Chriſt*, and *accepting* of, and *cloſing* with him. A true and ſaving coming to Chriſt, is (as Chriſt often teaches) a coming ſo, as to forſake all for him. And as was obſerved before, to forſake all for Chriſt in heart, is the ſame thing as to have a heart actually to forſake all; but the proper evidence of having a heart actually to forſake all, is indeed actually to forſake all, ſo far as called to it. If a prince make ſuit to a woman in a far country, that ſhe would forſake her own people, and father's houſe, and come to him, to be his bride; the proper evidence of the compliance of her heart with the king's ſuit, is her actually forſaking her own people, and father's houſe, and coming to him. By this, her compliance with the king's ſuit is made perfect, in the ſame ſenſe that the apoſtle James ſays, *by works is faith made perfect* *. Chriſt promiſes us eternal life, on condition of our coming to him: but it is ſuch a coming as he directed the young man to, who came to inquire, *what he ſhall do, that he might have eternal life;* Chriſt bid him *go and ſell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him.* If he had conſented in his heart to the propoſal, (and had therein come to Chriſt in his heart), the proper evidence of it would have been his doing of it: and therein his coming to Chriſt would have been made perfect. When Chriſt called Levi the publican, when ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and in the midſt of his worldly gains; the cloſing of Levi's heart with this invitation of his Saviour, to come to him, was manifeſted, and made perfect, by his actually riſing up, leaving all, and following him, Luke v. 27. 28. Chriſt and other things, are ſet before us together, for us practically to cleave to one, and forſake the other: in ſuch a caſe, a practical cleaving to Chriſt, is a practical *acceptance* of Chriſt; as much as a beggar's reaching out his hand, and taking a gift that is offered,

* "Our real taking of Chriſt, appears in our actions and works; Iſ. i. 19 *If ye conſent and obey, ye ſhall eat the good things of the land.* That is, If ye will conſent to take JEHOVAH for your Lord and King: *if ye give conſent;* there is the firſt thing: but that is not enough; *but if ye alſo obey.* The conſent that ſtandeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will be ſeen in your obedience, in the acts of your lives. *If ye conſent and obey, ye ſhall eat the good things of the land;* that is, you ſhall take of all that he hath that is convenient for you: for then you are married to him in truth, and have an intereſt in all his goods." *Dr Preſton's Church's Carriage.*

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is his practical acceptance of the gift. Yea, that act of the soul that is in cleaving to Christ in practice, is itself the most perfect coming of the soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper evidence of *trusting in Christ for salvation*. The proper signification of the word *trust*, according to the more ordinary use of it, both in common speech, and in the holy scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person's mind, to run some venture in practice, or in something that he does, on the credit of another's sufficiency and faithfulness. And therefore the proper evidence of his trusting, is *the venture he runs in what he does*. He is not properly said to run any venture, in a dependence on any thing, that does nothing on that dependence, or whose practice is no otherwise than if he had no dependence. For a man to run a venture, on a dependence on another, is for him to do something from that dependence, by which he seems to expose himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that dependence. And therefore it is in complying with the difficulties, and seeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for happiness and life. They depend on such promises as that, Matth. x. 39. *He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it*. And so they part with all, and venture their all, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and truth. And this is the scripture notion of trusting in Christ, in the exercise of a saving faith in him. Thus Abraham, the father of believers, trusted in Christ, and by faith forsook his own country, in a reliance on the covenant of grace God established with him, Heb. xi. 8. 9. Thus also *Moses, by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, Heb. xi. 23. &c. So *by faith*, others exposed themselves to be *stoned*, and *sawn in sunder*, or *slain with the sword*; endured the *trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, and wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*. And in this sense the apostle Paul, by faith, trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole interest, in a dependence on the ability and faithfulness of his Redeemer, under great persecutions, and in suffering the loss of all things; 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and*

*and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.*

If a man ſhould have word brought him from the king of a diſtant land, that he intended to make him his heir, if upon receiving the tidings, he immediately leaves his native land, and friends, and all that he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears; then he may be ſaid to venture himſelf, and all he has in the world upon it. But if he only ſits ſtill, and hopes for the promiſed benefit, inwardly pleaſing himſelf with the thoughts of it; he cannot properly he ſaid to venture himſelf upon it; he runs no venture in the caſe; he does nothing, otherwiſe than he would do, if he had received no ſuch tidings, by which he would be expoſed to any ſuffering, in caſe all ſhould fail. So he that on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and in a dependence on the report of the goſpel, concerning life and immortality, forſakes all, or does ſo at leaſt ſo far as there is occaſion, making every thing entirely give place to his eternal intereſt; he, and he only, may properly be ſaid to venture himſelf on the report of the goſpel. And this is the proper evidence of a true truſt in Chriſt for ſalvation.

Practice is the proper evidence of a *gracious love*, both to God and men. The texts that plainly teach this, have been ſo often mentioned already, that it is needleſs to repeat them.

Practice is the proper evidence of *humility*. That expreſſion and manifeſtation of humility of heart, which God ſpeaks of, as the great expreſſion of it, that he inſiſts on; that we ſhould look upon as the proper expreſſion and manifeſtation of it: but this is *walking humbly*; Micah vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

This is alſo the proper evidence of the true *fear of God*. Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.* Pſal. xxxiv. 11. &c. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.——Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from ſpeaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; ſeek peace and purſue it.* Prov. iii. 7. *Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* Prov. xvi. 6. *By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil.* Job i. 8. *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job,——a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth evil?* Chap. ii. 3. *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job,—— a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth evil? and ſtill he holdeth faſt his integrity, although thou movedſt me againſt him.* Pſal. xxxvi. 1. *The tranſgreſſion of the wicked*

*wicked faith within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

So practice, in rendering again according to benefits received, is the proper evidence of true *thankfulneſs*. Pſal. cxvi. 12. *What ſhall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. *But Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him.* Paying our vows unto God, and ordering our converſation aright, ſeem to be ſpoken of, as the proper expreſſion and evidence of true thankfulneſs, in the 50th Pſalm, ver. 14. *Offer unto God thankſgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Moſt High.* ver. 23. *Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God.*

So the proper evidence of *gracious deſires and longings*, and that which diſtinguiſhes them from thoſe that are falſe and vain, is, that they are not idle wiſhes and wouldings, like Balaam's; but effectual in practice, to ſtir up perſons earneſtly and thoroughly to ſeek the things they long for. Pſal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after.* Pſal. lxiii. 1. 2. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is, to ſee thy power and thy glory.* ver. 8. *My ſoul followeth hard after thee.* Cant. i. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious *hope*. 1 John iii. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* Patient continuance in well-doing, through the difficulties and trials of the Chriſtian courſe, is often mentioned as the proper expreſſion and fruit of a Chriſtian hope; 1 Theſſ. i. 3. *Remembering without ceaſing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.* 1 Pet. i. 13. 14. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; as obedient children*, &c. Pſal. cxix. 166. *Lord, I have hoped in thy ſalvation, and done thy commandments.* Pſal. lxxviii. 7. *That they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord; but keep his commandments.*

A chearful practice of our duty and doing the will of God, is the proper evidence of a truly *holy joy*. Iſ. lxiv. 5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteouſneſs.* Pſal. cxix. 111. 112. *Thy teſtimonies have I taken for my heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, even unto the end.* Ver. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches.*

*riches.* 1 Cor. xiii. 6. *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* 2 Cor. viii. 2. *The abundance of their joy, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*

Practice also is the proper evidence of Christian *fortitude.* The trial of a good soldier, is not in his chimney corner, but in the field of battle; 1 Cor. ix. 25. 26. 2 Tim. ii. 3. 4. 5.

And as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace; so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretences persons may make to great discoveries, great love and joys, they are no further to be regarded, than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that does not hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly measured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a person of a very ill natural temper, as another. Although a person of such a temper, will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace, as another; the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great; because a person of a good natural temper did not behave himself so ill, before conversion.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is *the chief* of all the signs of saving grace. And before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly, in answer to two objections, that may possibly be made by some, against what has been said upon this head.

*Object.* 1. Some may be ready to say, this seems to be contrary to that opinion, so much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state, chiefly by their inward experience, and that spiritual experiences are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, It is doubtless a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should chiefly judge of their state by their experience. But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all contrary to that opinion. The chief sign of grace to the consciences of Christians, being Christian practice, in the sense that has been explained, and according to what has been shewn to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with Christian experience being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is spiritual practice; and that is not the motion of a body, that knows

knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: but ſpiritual practice in man, is the practice of a ſpirit and body jointly, or the practice of a ſpirit, animating, commanding and actuating a body, to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And therefore the main thing in this holy practice, is the holy acts of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Chriſtian practice, only ſecondarily, and as they are dependent and conſequent on the acts of the ſoul. The exerciſes of grace that Chriſtians find, or are conſcious to, within themſelves, are what they *experience* within themſelves; and herein therefore lies Chriſtian experience: and this Chriſtian experience, conſiſts as much in thoſe operative exerciſes of grace in the will, that are immediately concerned in the management of the behaviour of the body, as in other exerciſes. Theſe inward exerciſes, are not the leſs a part of Chriſtian experience, becauſe they have outward behaviour immediately connected with them. A ſtrong act of love to God, is not the leſs a part of ſpiritual experience, becauſe it is the act that immediately produces and effects ſome ſelf denying and expenſive outward action, which is much to the honour and glory of God.

To ſpeak of Chriſtian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely diſtinct, is to make a diſtinction without conſideration or reaſon. Indeed all Chriſtian experience, is not properly called practice; but all Chriſtian practice is properly experience. And the diſtinction that is made between them, is not only an unreaſonable, but an unſcriptural diſtinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Chriſtian experience; and both reaſon and ſcripture repreſent it as the chief, and moſt important, and moſt diſtinguiſhing part of it. So it is repreſented in Jer. xxii. 15. 16. *Did not thy father eat and drink, and do juſtice and judgement?—He judged the cauſe of the poor and needy:—was not this to know me? ſaith the Lord.* Our inward acquaintance with God, ſurely belongs to the head of experimental religion; but this God repreſents, as conſiſting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exerciſes of thoſe graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion; but theſe the ſcripture repreſents as conſiſting chiefly in practice, in thoſe forementioned texts. 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* 2 John 6. *This is love, that we walk after his commandments.* Pſal. xxxiv. 11. *&c. Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear*

*of the Lord:—Depart from evil, and do good.* Such experiences as these Hezekiah took comfort in chiefly, on his sick-bed; when he said, *Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* And such experiences as these, the plalmist chiefly insists upon, in the 119th Psalm, and elsewhere. Such experiences as these, the apostle Paul mainly insists upon, when he speaks of his experiences in his epistles; as Rom. i. 9. *God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.*—2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that—by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* Chap. iv. 13. *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak.* Chap. v. 7. *We walk by faith, not by sight.* ver. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us.* Chap. vi. 4.—7. *In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,—in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,—by the power of God.* Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* Phil. iii. 7. 8. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* Col. i. 29. *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* 1 Thess. ii. 2. *We were bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.* ver. 8. 9. 10. *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel, labouring night and day.——Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.* And such experiences as these they were, that this blessed apostle chiefly comforted himself in the consideration of, when he was going to martyrdom, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 7. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience, lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that sort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice

practice consists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of *experimental religion.* For that experience which is in these exercises of grace, that are found, and prove effectual, at the very point of trial, wherein God proves which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts, are, as has been shown already, the proper *experiment* of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found *by experience.* This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual *experience and trial,* whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy, which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact; so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the like test.

There is a sort of external religious practice, wherein is no inward experience; which no account is made of in the sight of God; but it is esteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called experience, that is without practice, being neither accompanied, nor followed with a Christian behaviour; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience, and spiritual light and discoveries. Whenever a person finds within him, an heart to treat God as God, at the time that he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment, that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have at such a time that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercises. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been said, contrary to what is asserted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of grace. For that doth not hinder but that these operative, productive acts, those exercises of grace that are effectual in practice, may be the highest evidences, above all other kinds of acts of grace. Nor does it hinder but that, when there are many of these acts and

exercises, following one another in a course, under various trials, of every kind, the evidence is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man by once seeing his neighbour, may have good evidence of his presence: but by seeing him from day to day, and conversing with him in a course, in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples, when they first saw Christ, after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive: but by conversing with him for forty days, and his *shewing himself to them alive, by many infallible proofs*, they had yet higher evidence *.

The witness or seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtless consists in the effect of the Spirit of God in the heart, in the implantation and exercises of grace there, and so consists in experience. And it is also beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit, is the highest kind of evidence of the saints adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, that have been spoken of, God gives witness, and sets to his seal, in the most conspicuous, eminent, and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church, that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest and most joyful evidences to his saints of their sonship, in those effectual exercises of grace under trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full assurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to that, 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you.* And that in Rom. v. 2. 3. *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations.* And agreeable to what the apostle Paul often declares of what he experienced in his trials. And when the apostle Peter, in my text, speaks of the *joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, which the Chri-

* "The more these visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be. A man that has been assured of such visible exercises of grace, may quickly after be in doubt, whether he was not mistaken. But when such actings are renewed again and again, he grows more settled and established about his good estate. If a man see a thing once, that makes him sure; but if afterwards he fear he was deceived, when he comes to see it again, he is more sure he was not mistaken. If a man read such passages in a book, he is sure it is so. Some months after, some may bear him down, that he was mistaken, so as to make him question it himself: but when he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The more mens grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto "you, through the knowledge of "God and Jesus our Lord." *Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrisy.*

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ſtians to whom he wrote, experienced; he has reſpect to what they found under perſecution, as appears by the context. Chriſt's thus manifeſting himſelf, as the friend and ſaviour of his ſaints, cleaving to him under trials, ſeems to have been repreſented of old, by his coming and manifeſting himſelf, to Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, in the furnace. And when the apoſtle ſpeaks of the witneſs of the Spirit, in Rom. viii. 15. 16. 17. he has a more immediate reſpect to what the Chriſtians experienced, in their exerciſes of love to God, in ſuffering perſecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verſes, encouraging the Chriſtian Romans under their ſufferings, that though their bodies be dead, becauſe of ſin, yet they ſhould be raiſed to life again. But it is more eſpecially plain by the verſe immediately following, ver. 18. *For I reckon, that the ſufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* So the apoſtle has evidently reſpect to their perſecutions, in all that he ſays to the end of the chapter. So when the apoſtle ſpeaks of the *earneſt of the Spirit*, which God had given to him, in 2 Cor. v. 5. the context ſhews plainly that he has reſpect to what was given him in his great trials and ſufferings. And in that promiſe of *the white ſtone, and new name, to him that overcomes*, Rev. ii. 17. it is evident Chriſt has a ſpecial reſpect to a benefit that Chriſtians ſhould obtain, by overcoming, in the trial they had, in that day of perſecution. This appears by ver. 13. and many other paſſages in this epiſtle to the ſeven churches of Aſia.

*Object.* 2. Some alſo may be ready to object againſt what has been ſaid of Chriſtian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a *legal* doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of ſuch great importance in religion, magnifies *works*, and tends to lead men to make too much of their *own doings*, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not ſeem well to conſiſt with that great goſpel-doctrine of *juſtification by faith alone.*

But this objection is altogether without reaſon. Which way is it inconſiſtent with the freeneſs of God's grace, that holy practice ſhould be a ſign of God's grace? It is our works being the *price* of God's favour, and not their being the *ſign* of it, that is the thing which is inconſiſtent with the freeneſs of that favour. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a *ſign* of the kindneſs of him who gave it to him, is in no reſpect inconſiſtent with the freeneſs of that kindneſs.

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It is his having money in his hand as the price of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the freeness of the grace of God to sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not that no holy and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a fruit, and so a sign of that grace; but that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace; that kindness is shown to the unworthy and unlovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fulness of God's nature, the fulness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification without works, (as this doctrine is taught in the scripture), that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or any thing in us, which is in any wise accepted with God, as a *balance* for the guilt of sin, or a recommendation of sinners to his acceptance as heirs of life. Thus we are justified only by the righteousness of Christ, and not by our righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is said that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or any thing in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our souls receiving Christ, or adhering to, and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a sign of an interest in Christ.

If the doctrines of free grace, and justification by faith alone, be inconsistent with the importance of holy practice as a sign of grace; then they are equally inconsistent with the importance of any thing whatsoever in us as a sign of grace, any holiness, or any grace that is in us, or any of our experiences or religion: for it is as contrary to the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith alone, that any of these should be the righteousness which we are justified by, as that holy practice should be so. It is with holy works, as it is with holy qualifications: it is inconsistent with the freeness of gospel-grace, that a title to salvation should be given to men for the loveliness of any of their holy qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the holiness of their works. It is inconsistent with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, that an interest in Christ and his benefits should be given for the loveliness of a man's true holiness,

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for the amiableneſs of his renewed, ſanctified, heavenly heart, his love to God, and being like God, or his experience of joy in the Holy Ghoſt, ſelf-emptineſs, a ſpirit to exalt Chriſt above all, and to give all glory to him, and a heart devoted unto him: I ſay, it is inconſiſtent with the goſpel-doctrine of free grace, that a title to Chriſt's benefits ſhould be given out of regard to the lovelineſs of any of theſe, or that any of theſe ſhould be our righteouſneſs in the affair of juſtification. And yet this does not hinder the importance of theſe things as evidences of an intereſt in Chriſt. Juſt ſo it is with reſpect to holy actions and works. To make light of works, becauſe we be not juſtified by works, is the ſame thing in effect, as to make light of all religion, all grace and holineſs, yea, true evangelical holineſs, and all gracious experience: for all is included, when the ſcripture ſays, we are not juſtified by works: for by works in this caſe, is meant all our own righteouſneſs, religion, or holineſs, and every thing that *is in us*, all the good we do, and all the good which we are conſcious of, all external acts, and all internal acts and exerciſes of grace, and all experiences, and all thoſe holy and heavenly things wherein the life and power, and the very eſſence of religion do conſiſt, all thoſe great things which Chriſt and his apoſtles mainly inſiſted on in their preaching, and endeavoured to promote, as of the greateſt conſequence in the hearts and lives of men, and all good diſpoſitions, exerciſes and qualifications of every kind whatſoever; and even faith itſelf, conſidered as a part of our holineſs. For we are juſtified by none of theſe things: and if we were, we ſhould, in a ſcripture-ſenſe, be juſtified by works. And therefore if it be not legal, and contrary to the evangelical doctrine of juſtification without works, to inſiſt on any of theſe, as of great importance, as evidences of an intereſt in Chriſt; then no more is it thus, to inſiſt on the importance of holy practice. It would be legal to ſuppoſe, that holy practice juſtifies by bringing us to a title to Chriſt's benefits, as the price of it, or as recommending to it by its precioufneſs or excellence; but it is not legal to ſuppoſe, that holy practice juſtifies the ſincerity of a believer, as the proper evidence of it. The apoſtle James did not think it legal to ſay, that *Abraham our father was juſtified by works*, in this ſenſe. The Spirit that indited the ſcripture, did not think the great importance and abſolute neceſſity of holy practice, in this reſpect, to be inconſiſtent with the freeneſs of grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6. 7. God ſays, *I will give unto him that is athirſt, of the fountain of the water of life freely;* and then adds, in the very next words,

words, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things.* As though behaving well in the Christian race and warfare, were the condition of the promise. So in the next chapter, in the 14th and 15th verses, Christ says, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city:* and then declares in the 15th verse, *how they that are of a wicked practice* shall be excluded; and yet in the two verses next following, does with very great solemnity, give forth an invitation to all to come and take of the water of life freely; *I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning-star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* So chap. iii. 20. 21. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* But then it is added in the next words, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.* And in that great invitation of Christ, Matth. xi. latter end, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;* Christ adds in the next words, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light:* as though taking the burden of Christ's service, and imitating his example, were necessary in order to the promised rest. So in that great invitation to sinners to accept of free grace; Is. lv. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price:* even there, in the continuation of the same invitation, the sinner's forsaking his wicked practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining mercy; ver. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* So the riches of divine grace, in the justification of sinners, is set forth, with the necessity of holy practice, Is. i. 16. *&c. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* And in that most solemn invitation of Wisdom, Prov. ix. after it is represented what great provision is made, and

and how that all things were ready, the house built, the beasts killed, the wine mingled, and the table furnished, and the messengers sent forth to invite the guests; then we have the free invitation, ver. 4. 5. 6. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding,* (*i. e.* has no righteousness), *she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.* But then in the next breath it follows, *Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding:* as though forsaking sin, and going in the way of holiness, were necessary in order to life. So that the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holy practice, which are thus from time to time joined together in scripture, are not inconsistent one with another. Nor does it at all diminish the honour and importance of faith, that the exercises and effects of faith in practice, should be esteemed the chief signs of it; any more than it lessens the importance of life, that action and motion are esteemed the chief signs of that.

So that in what has been said of the importance of holy practice as the main sign of sincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the freedom and sovereignty of gospel-grace, nothing in the least clashing with the gospel-doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law, nothing in the least tending to lessen the glory of the Mediator, and our dependence on his righteousness, nothing infringing on the special prerogatives of faith in the affair of our salvation, nothing in any wise detracting from the glory of God and his mercy, or exalting man, or diminishing his dependence and obligation. So that if any are against such an importance of holy practice as has been spoken of, it must be only from a senseless aversion to the letters and sound of the word *works*; when there is no reason in the world to be given for it, but what may be given with equal force, why they should have an aversion to the words *holiness*, *godliness*, *grace*, *religion*, *experience*, and even *faith* itself: for to make a righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the way of the new covenant, as to make a righteousness of holy practice *.

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* "You say you know Christ, and the love and good-will of Christ towards you, and that he is the propitiation for your sins. How do you know this? "He that saith I know "him, and keepeth not his command- "ments, is a liar," 1 John ii. 4. True, might some reply, he that keeps not the commands of Christ, hath thereby a sure evidence that he knows him not, and that he is not united to him; but is this any evidence that we

It is greatly to the hurt of religion, for persons to make light of, and insist little on, those things which the scripture insists most upon, as of most importance in the evidence of our interest in Christ, (under a notion that to lay weight on these things is legal, and an old covenant-way); and so to neglect the exercises, and effectual operations of grace in practice, and insist almost wholly on discoveries, and the method and manner of the immanent exercises of conscience and grace in contemplation; depending on an ability to make nice distinctions in these matters, and a faculty of accurate discerning in them, from philosophy or experience. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further signs, than those that the scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently insisted on, as signs of godliness. They who pretend to a greater accuracy in giving signs, or by their extraordinary experience, or insight into the nature of things, to give more distinguishing marks, which shall more thoroughly search out, and detect the hypocrite, are but subtil to darken their own minds, and the minds of others; their refinings, and nice discerning, are in God's sight, but refined foolishness, and sagacious delusion. Here are applicable those words of Agur, Prov. xxx. 5. 6. *Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to them that put their trust in him: add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* Our wisdom and discerning, with regard to the hearts of men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little way into the nature of the soul, and the depths of man's heart. The ways are so many whereby persons affections may be moved without any supernatural influence, the natural springs of the affections are so various and so secret, so many things have oftentimes a joint influence on the affections, the imagination, (and that in ways innumerable and unsearchable), natural temper, education, the common influences of the Spirit of God, a surprising concourse of affecting circumstances,

do know him, and that we are united to him, if we do keep his commandments? Yes verily, saith the apostle, "Hereby we do know that we know him, "if we keep his commandments." And again, ver. 5. "Hereby know we "that we are in him." What can be more plain? What a vanity is it to say, that this is running upon a covenant of works'——O beloved, it is a sad thing to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification possibly may be an evidence. May be? Is it not certain? Assuredly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own promises of favour are not sure evidences thereof, and consequently that they are lies and untruths.——Our Saviour, who was no legal preacher, pronounceth, and consequently evidenceth blessedness, by eight or nine promises, expressly made to such persons, as had inherent graces, Matth. v. 3. 4. *&c. Shepard's Sound Believer*, p. 221. 222. 223.

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an extraordinary coincidence of things in the courſe of mens thoughts, together with the ſubtil management of inviſible malicious ſpirits; that no philoſophy or experience will ever be ſufficient to guide us ſafely through this labyrinth and maze, without our cloſely following the clue which God has given us in his word. God knows his own reaſons why he inſiſts on ſome things, and plainly ſets them forth as the things that we ſhould try ourſelves by, rather than others. It may be it is becauſe he knows that theſe things are attended with leſs perplexity, and that we are leſs liable to be deceived by them than others. He beſt knows our nature; and he knows the nature and manner of his own operations; and he beſt knows the way of our ſafety: he knows what allowances to make for different ſtates of his church, and different tempers of particular perſons, and varieties in the manner of his own operations, how far nature may reſemble grace, and how far nature may be mixed with grace, what affections may riſe from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with ſpiritual illumination. And therefore it is our wiſdom not to take his work out of his hands; but to follow him, and lay the ſtreſs of the judgement of ourſelves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwiſe, no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded, and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the way of looking chiefly at thoſe things, which Chriſt and his apoſtles and prophets chiefly inſiſted on, and ſo in judging of ourſelves and others, chiefly regarding practical exerciſes and effects of grace, not neglecting other things; it would be of manifold happy conſequence; it would above all things tend to the conviction of deluded hypocrites, and to prevent the deluſion of thoſe whoſe hearts were never brought to a thorough compliance with the ſtrait and narrow way which leads to life; it would tend to deliver us from innumerable perplexities, ariſing from the various inconſiſtent ſchemes there are about methods and ſteps of experience; it would greatly tend to prevent profeſſors neglecting ſtrictneſs of life, and tend to promote their engagedneſs and earneſtneſs in their Chriſtian walk; and it would become faſhionable for men to ſhew their Chriſtianity, more by an amiable diſtinguiſhed behaviour, that by an abundant and exceſſive declaring their experiences; and we ſhould get into the way of appearing lively in religion, more by being lively in the ſervice of God and our generation, than by the livelineſs and forwardneſs of our tongues, and making a buſineſs of proclaiming on the houſe-tops, with our mouths, the holy and eminent acts and exerciſes of our own hearts; and Chriſtians that are intimate

friends, would talk together of their experiences and comforts, in a manner better becoming Chriſtian humility and modeſty, and more to each others profit; their tongues not running before, but rather going behind their hands and feet, after the prudent example of the bleſſed apoſtle, 2 Cor. xii. 6.; and many occaſions of ſpiritual pride would be cut off; and ſo a great door ſhut againſt the devil; and a great many of the main ſtumbling-blocks againſt experimental and powerful religion would be removed; and religion would be declared and manifeſted in ſuch a way, that inſtead of hardening ſpectators, and exceedingly promoting infidelity and atheiſm, would above all things tend to convince men that there is a reality in religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their conſciences of the importance and excellency of religion. Thus the light of profeſſors would ſo ſhine before men, that others ſeeing their good works, would glorify their Father which is in heaven.

THE END.

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